Canadian Heritage
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# Immigrants and Civic Participation: Contemporary Policy and Research Issues

**A one day seminar organized by the Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage**
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Canada

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## Introduction

Since the inception of the world's first government sanctioned Multiculturalism Policy in 1971, the Government of Canada has been interested in ensuring that its policies address the challenges of ethnic, racial, linguistic and religious diversity. These policies have evolved over time to meet the changing needs of Canadians. This evolution has been guided by three fundamental goals:

**Identity:** fostering a society that recognizes, respects and reflects a diversity of cultures such that people of all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and attachment to Canada.

**Civic Participation:** developing, among Canada's diverse people, active citizens with both the opportunity and the capacity to participate in shaping the future of their communities and their country.

**Social Justice:** building a society that ensures fair and equitable treatment and that respects the dignity of and accommodates people of all origins.

Most disciplines in the social sciences and humanities and some of the hard sciences address diversity issues directly or tangentially, thus producing an incredible quantity of information. Considerable research has been done in each of the three fields described above from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds in both English and French. This research constantly grows and evolves to cover issues that develop as diversity in Canada increases and matures. One of the primary challenges of the Multiculturalism Program is to draw on this research to develop and implement its policies and programs.

To assist in framing research questions on these issues within the program goals, the Strategic Research and Business Planning Unit of the Multiculturalism Program decided to host a series of research seminars covering the three goals of the program. The objective of each of these seminars is to bring a variety of policy makers, researchers, and NGOs together to consider the state of the art research in one of the targeted areas, the issues developing within that area, and the research gaps which need to be addressed. The dynamic nature of these seminars and subsequent interactions among participants are designed to establish long lasting networks.

The Civic Participation seminar was the first of these planned seminars. It was held in October 1997 in conjunction with the biennial conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association and the Second National Metropolis Conference, thus enabling us to capitalize on the considerable expertise which resides within both networks.

The resulting background papers, keynote address, and discussions contained in this report will help contribute to the discourse surrounding civic participation in Canada. At the same time, the network resulting from this seminar is much more durable and it is poised to have a long standing effect on research and policy formation around the issue of immigrant and ethnocultural civic participation in Canada.

The most fully fledged of the networks which have resulted from this seminar is the Citizenship Education Research Network (CERN). CERN has met several times, has charted out research gaps and has begun to fill them. It has also developed, with the support of the Multiculturalism Program and the Metropolis Project Team, an active niche on the Metropolis Website (***www.canada.metropolis.globalx.net***).

A second working group on political participation has also yielded some significant networking. Researchers met in Ottawa in May 1998 to discuss a comparative project on political participation of ethnocultural minorities and immigrants in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. It has also resulted in a workshop involving academics from eleven cities around the world at the Third International Metropolis Conference held in Israel in December 1998.

A planned working group on voluntary participation has developed less quickly than the others. However, with the release of data on voluntarism by Statistics Canada, it is hoped that a network of researchers will coalesce.

Additional copies of this report can be obtained from the Program at (819) 953-7318. Comments on the attached report are also very welcome.

Jeff Bullard
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## Acknowledgement

No event involving sixty people from across Canada organizes itself. Our sincere thanks is owed to many people for their time and energy. Without the organizational capacity of Marie McAndrew and her teams at CESA and the Montreal Metropolis Centre, this event would not have taken place.

Similarly, without the constant care and attention at the Ottawa end from members of the Strategic Research and Business Planning Unit of the Multiculturalism Program including John Biles, Barb Preston, and Suzanne Samson, this seminar would not have been a success.

The willingness of members of the academic, policy making and NGO communities to participate in collaborative endeavours to develop and implement policy relevant research in the area of ethnocultural diversity in Canada continues to be valued and deeply appreciated.

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# Social Participation and Social Capital: Introductory Lecture

by

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Second National Metropolis Conference

Immigrants and Civic Participation:
Contemporary Policy and Research Issues

Montréal, November 1997

My presentation deals with civic or social participation in general, and on the part of immigrants in particular. It has four parts: the significance of participation for the community and its institutions and for the creation of social capital; the modes of participation; social capital and ethnic or racial boundaries; and the factors affecting social participation. I will not go into the significance of civic participation for the individual — simply because my time is very limited and also because James Frideres will explore this topic further.

**I - The significance of civic or social participation**

First of all, why should we be interested in the civic or social participation of individuals in general and of immigrants in particular? One feature of modern life is the dissociation of group or community membership from social participation, and even of membership from identification with the community.[1] Society is made up of a multitude of groups and communities: cities and neighbourhoods, religious groups, ethnic communities, and associations of all kinds. It also includes groups defined in more abstract terms, such as social movements, age groups, social class and ideological groupings, such as the "right" and the "left." These types of groupings are not identifiable in the same way as are neighbourhoods or associations, for instance.

As membership in a group or community of any kind does not necessarily involve identification, participation or contribution to group projects, people have to make choices. One may for instance be affiliated with a political party without identifying with it and without feeling an obligation to support it (except for voting every four years). The same is true for a church, union or professional association, a neighbourhood, city, ethnic community and society as a whole. This dissociation of membership from identification or participation can vary in degree from nearly complete to only partial.

Since being part of a group/community does not necessarily imply an obligation to make a contribution, identification and participation are *voluntary*. In a small community where individual behaviour is very noticeable, it is relatively more difficult to escape the pressures of one's environment, and more difficult not to be involved in community activities and projects. In larger communities, such as in most urban settings, the obligation to participate, to use an oxymoron, is a voluntary obligation. A voluntary obligation is a self-imposed one, which is not dictated by others. In such situations, individuals may choose to participate, to a greater or less extent, or not at all. Moreover, they may choose the groups, organizations and community in which they would like to participate.

This type of situation can be problematic for an institution, an association or group, whether this be an ethnic group, a parish, a political party, a community association, a neighbourhood, city or even society as a whole. In view of this dissociation, meaning that identification and social involvement are not necessarily concomitant with membership, it is left up to the communities, institutions and their

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[1] See Breton (1994) for a typology of the bases and modes of group membership.

leaders to "mobilize" individuals. Without some contribution by members, the vitality of the group will decline, as will its ability to undertake group projects. The performance of associations and institutions will also be affected. This is in fact Putnam's theory (1993) for explaining the variations he observed in the performance of regional governments in Italy. He attempts to demonstrate that the performance of these institutions is due to the "social capital" available in various communities, in other words, the degree of organized reciprocity, civic solidarity and involvement.

Capital is defined as any resource that makes it possible to embark successfully on a project of any kind; in other words, the resources needed to undertake activities. This is reasonably clear in the case of financial capital: plans can be made and carried out with money. The same is true of cultural capital, in that education and experience, for instance, are precious resources in pursuing a career or other personal projects.

In the case of *social* capital, the resources that make it possible or easier to carry out projects or reach objectives are less apparent. Social capital is not material in nature and does not lie within the individual, but rather in the quality of relationships among individuals. More specifically, social capital can be viewed as the sum of *social expectations* (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993). A community or institution has social capital if it can count on the contribution of members to achieve certain projects or to tackle problems that arise. The contribution of members can also be monetary, or in the form of an active commitment or social participation of some kind.

Another element of social capital is trust in the fact that individuals will not take advantage of the group or institution for their own personal gain; that they will all observe the basic rules of the implicit social contract that makes it possible for the community or institution to function.

Social participation can produce social capital in a community, association or institution. Participation involves exchange, which creates mutual obligation among individuals. Mutual obligation is critical because it is the social mechanism that forms the basis of *our expectation* that others will contribute to the group's welfare. Participation can engender or strengthen a sense of responsibility towards others, the community, or a particular institution. Leaders of communities and institutions can therefore expect members to participate and contribute to group projects. It is this assurance that constitutes social capital.

Social participation can also sensitize group members to the fact that they are subject to the same economic, political, cultural or social conditions — such as immigrant status. Through social involvement, people may realize that they share the same lot, are "in the same boat" as others in certain respects. They can then identify with a "community of fate," so that social expectations are based on the feeling of *interdependence*, involving mutual obligations, and the idea that cooperation may be generally advantageous. Participation can therefore promote and strengthen identification with the group or institution since it is viewed as being advantageous.

Playing a part in group projects and activities may in particular lead individuals to identify with the community or institution, in turn supporting their social involvement.

One common theory is that identification occurs as a result of receiving benefits from the group — be it an association, the State or other public institutions. If there are no advantages in membership, why get involved? There is another equally important, but often overlooked hypothesis: that identification derives from investing of oneself, one's time and personal resources in the group or institution and its projects. This personal investment leads individuals to see the community as something of their own making and which, therefore, belongs to them. If the community is viewed as belonging to someone else, it is difficult to identify, even if it provides certain benefits. If these benefits disappear or diminish, the group may be abandoned for a more advantageous one.

**II - Modes of participation**

Activity is at the core of participation. This includes direct action in a project, as well as following events through the media and making financial contributions. Formal membership is secondary. One can initially become a member in an entirely passive way. Moreover, several social activities can be pursued through organizations or associations without membership (e.g., volunteering at a hospital or for an election campaign). Finally, social participation often occurs via networks of personal contacts and not through organizations or associations.

Building and maintaining a social network is also a very significant form of social participation. It can create feelings of mutual obligation and social trust. In other terms, it can lead to the creation of social capital.

Participation is not limited to communities with a set of political, social or cultural organizations and associations. It may occur via activities and social networks that are not based on a geographical community, such as a neighbourhood. This is true for many professional, political and cultural affiliations.

In certain social settings in Canada — in Montréal for instance — civic or social participation involves linguistic choice: choosing the community in which to be involved and the language used. Making a linguistic choice is a prime example of social participation.

Not all forms of social participation necessarily produce social capital. One must also consider the "quality" of participation. A distinction must be made between activities which, although social, produce private benefits, and those which seek to bring about benefits for all and can assist the community or society as a whole. These can include participation in protest movements seeking to bring about social, political, economic or cultural change.

The activities of self-help groups are mixed in nature: they can produce some social capital, but less than that produced by groups working for social causes that affect the entire community. In the case of mutual assistance, individuals or families take action because they are grappling with the same problem (parents of a child with a disability or tenants of the same landlord, for instance). This type of participation is

different from that which seeks to generate benefits for everyone (creation or management of a community centre, for example).

Enjoying cultural or recreational services is another form of civic participation. Attending a hockey game or a play is a type of social participation, but does it create social capital? It is perhaps an instance of consumption rather than social participation.

Finally, there are forms of participation that have a negative effect: they destroy social capital. This is true of people enjoying a "free ride," because they take advantage of community benefits without helping generate them. Participation therefore involves taking advantage of the benefits the community or institution has to offer, while making the minimum contribution to its operation. This type of behaviour and attitude undermine the sense of mutual obligation. They also undermine social trust and encourage cynicism by promoting the belief that there is only one valid human motive, namely, pursuing one's own personal interests. The key question then becomes "What's in it for me?" Clearly, this type of cynicism destroys social capital rather than creating it.

Some forms of participation create social capital, while others are neutral in this respect. Others are destructive because they undermine the sense of mutual obligation and social trust.

**III - Social capital and ethnic or racial boundaries**

In which communities or groups do individuals participate, whether through activities, networks, funding or formal membership in associations? This is an important question with regard to the creation or erosion of social capital. Does participation occur primarily within specific social or cultural boundaries or does it extend beyond them? A great deal of social participation takes place in religious groups, for example. People help each other, participate, on the condition that the partners and helpers belong to the same religion. Social capital is created within the group, but boundaries between the groups become more rigid, thereby reducing more generalized social capital. The same question can be raised in regard to social classes, ethnic and racial groups, family relations, or groups with some other social basis.

With immigrants, it is inevitable that social participation will occur within the ethnic community, at least at the outset. This is where social capital is most readily available to the immigrant. Belonging to the ethnic community is spontaneous and natural for the immigrant, and necessary for survival. With time and the passing of generations, however, social ties and participation must reach beyond ethnocultural and racial boundaries.

Increasing social capital solely within ethnic or racial boundaries without forming any "bridges" between groups may be a source of conflict, hence the importance of cross-community activities and structures to ensure that social participation and

interpersonal relationships extend beyond ethnic boundaries.[2] Such links are a prerequisite to the development of social trust among members of various ethnic or racial groups.[3]

## IV - Factors affecting social participation

Among the factors affecting social participation, two are especially noteworthy. The first is quite simply the opportunity to participate. The degree of social participation is often explained by way of individual characteristics, such as level of education, social class, religious affiliation, and personal motives. These factors no doubt play a role, but one should also consider whether participation initially depends on the opportunities to participate available to individuals belonging to different groups.

The study of community participation conducted by Statistics Canada in cooperation with the Secretary of State (1987), for instance, pointed to significant differences among religious groups. But are these differences attributable to different motives and social characteristics among members of the religious groups, or are they due to the fact that the various religious groups organize more (or fewer) activities in which their members can participate? As one Anglican minister told me, "Catholics go to mass and then it's all over; they go home. Among Anglicans, people are expected to stay after mass to meet and chat." The same is true in the Jewish community. The number of associations formed on the initiative of religious leaders also varies from one religious group to another. In short, different religious groups provide more or less opportunities for community participation. Such variations may also be noted among other types of groups. The social organization of communities or urban neighbourhoods can show different levels of development. In other words, participation structures or opportunities to participate should therefore be given as much or even more consideration than individual characteristics.

Secondly, access to activities is a factor, especially for members of ethnic minorities in general and immigrants in particular. In other words, to what degree is participation outside the ethnic group a function of the degree of openness of the networks, associations, and organizations in the host community and other ethnic or linguistic communities? With regard to the integration of immigrants, we sometimes forget to mention that this is in fact a two-way street. Gordon (1964) cites seven types of assimilation — we would say "integration" today — two of which pertain to the attitude and behaviour of the host society ("attitude and behaviour receptional assimilation"). Participation beyond ethnic or racial boundaries is partially a function of the openness of the associations, networks and structures of the host society. Here again, the structure of opportunities for participation is crucial.

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[2] Activities and structures that bridge ethnic and racial groups already exist in various communities (e.g., schools, churches, work, neighbourhoods). Research on such activities and structures and their effects would be very useful.

[3] See Matejko (1993) on this question.

The authority structure and decision-making mechanisms of community associations and agencies are another dimension of the opportunity structure. Indeed, Knoke found in one study (1981) that a democratic structure in associations encourages individual participation and involvement while an authoritarian structure discourages them.

**V - Conclusion: the opposite of civic participation**

De Tocqueville considers the opposite of civic participation to be the pursuit of private financial interests. Immersing oneself in financial and commercial markets diminishes the individual's role as a "citizen". Involvement in public affairs, by contrast, brings the individual out of social isolation, redirecting his or her personal interest into causes for the general good. In other words, it leads the individual to become involved in creating social capital. The opposite of civic participation is therefore not non-participation but the exclusive pursuit of one's personal interests.

There is a social theory that postulates that the general good is served when each individual pursues his or her own personal interests. Hirschman (1982), among others, rejects this theory:

> The dogged pursuit of happiness along the private road is not, as we often tend to think,'what comes naturally'; rather, it is presided over and impelled by an ideology which justifies it, not only in terms of its beneficial results for the individual pursuer, but as the surest and perhaps only way in which the individual can make a contribution to the common good. The ideological claims made for the private life thus sustain the individual's quest with two messages: one, the promise of satisfaction and happiness; and two, the assurance that there is no need for guilt feelings or regrets over the neglect of public life (67).

Hirschman argues that the ideological justification of the pursuit of individual interest and personal satisfaction undermines the essential elements of community and public life, such as cooperation, concern for the welfare of others, and voluntary contribution of one's own personal resources to help create benefits for the community.

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# Participation by Immigrants, Ethnocultural/visible Minorities in the Canadian Political Process

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**Second National Metropolis Conference**

**Immigrants and Civic Participation:**
**Contemporary Policy and Research Issues**

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## Introduction

This paper[4] provides a critical review of academic literature on the participation of immigrants, ethnocultural groups and visible minorities in the Canadian political process. The focus of the discussion is on research that has examined the participation of these groups in electoral and party politics at federal, provincial, and municipal levels. The definition of "political participation" applied in this review is thus purposefully narrow. It does not include the many other significant forms of political activism in which immigrants and non-immigrants engage - specifically ethnocultural community or individual political involvement in various social and protest movements, trade unions, "homeland politics," and the like (Stasiulis, 1994:204-207).

The following review will identify the main questions and findings of research on Canadian political participation of immigrants, ethnocultural minorities and visible minorities. It will then identify some gaps and biases in this research and suggest some areas that could fruitfully be explored in further research.

## 1. 'Mass' Political Participation of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities

Various studies have examined different types of political participation to address the question of whether immigrant participation rates match those of non-immigrants. Research conducted in the 1970s suggested that immigrant political involvement was lower than that of non-immigrants. These findings were contradicted by research in the 1980s suggesting that on the contrary, immigrants participated in politics as much as people born in Canada. For example, when focusing on membership in political organizations among Torontonians, Richmond and Goldlust (1977:52) concluded that, while political organizational membership was low overall, it "tend[ed] to be lower among immigrants than amongst Canadian-born."

These authors also found significant ethnic differences in organizational membership: Jewish respondents were more likely to belong to political organizations in comparison with Italians, Greek/Portuguese, and especially Asian/Black immigrants among whom such membership was found to be "almost non-existent."

Using 1973 data on ethnic groups in five Canadian cities, Reitz (1980) measured political participation in terms of an index that combined voting, attendance at political meetings, and familiarity with public affairs. Reitz's chief findings were that political participation was negatively associated with the intensity of ethnic identity (227) and that this negative association was to be found particularly among those low in socio-economic status. He argued that people of higher status have both higher political participation rates and weaker ethnic identities.

Thus, according to Reitz, strong ethnic identity and "loyalty to the culture of one's country or origin means the sacrifice of participation in the larger society" (226). For Reitz, ethnic cohesion rather than immigrant status hindered political participation.

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[4] The author wishes to thank Laura Gemmell for assisting in the literature search for this paper.

In a 1983 Toronto-based survey, Black (1987; 1991) compared voting, campaign activity, communal activity, contacting politicians, and involvement in protest movements of the British majority group and four categories of minority groups — South, North, and East Europeans, and British West Indians. In contrast to Reitz, Black garnered evidence to support the view that immigrant status rather than minority ethnic origin affects the level of political activity, even after controls for socio-economic background, partisanship, efficacy, and interest. Significantly, the disparity in political activity between the Canadian-born and foreign-born diminished as immigrants became more established in Canada. Black (1987) challenges the conventional view that non-British immigrants (particularly those migrating from non-democratic regimes) have difficulty bringing their past political experiences to bear in the new Canadian context. Indeed, there was little difference between British immigrants and those from South European, East European and West Indian sources in their capacity to transfer their past political experiences to the Canadian political setting.

In a complementary study, Black and Leithner (1988) examined one measure of ethnic identification - consumption of ethnic media - to argue that such intra-community activity does not hinder immigrants' political incorporation in Canada; rather, such activity furthers it by providing information on Canadian political issues.

In research conducted for the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, Simard (1991) examined the interest in Canadian politics and political participation of 57 community leaders in six visible minority communities - Arabic-speaking, Chinese, Haitian, South Asian, Jamaican and Vietnamese - with the majority (32) living in Montreal. Political participation in this study referred to voting, membership in political parties, financial contributions to political parties, and electoral campaigns.

Although the small, non-representative sample and diversity of views expressed in this study defied easy generalization, Simard found a high level of interest and extensive knowledge of Canadian political issues among visible minority community "elites." There appeared to be a positive association between length of time in Canada for both particular communities and individuals within them, on one hand, and community leaders' interest and knowledge of Canadian politics, on the other.

Chui, Curtis and Lambert (1991) use data from the *1984 Canadian National Election Study* to examine relative political participation of immigrants vs. Canadian-born with respect to seven different measures: involvement in a campaign, contacting politicians, voting, political organizational membership, exposure to political stimuli , interest in the 1984 election, and paying attention to politics in general.

Statistically significant differences were found in relation to only one measure: immigrants were slightly less likely to get in touch with politicians than were Canadian-born respondents. Length of residence only reduced the likelihood of voting and engaging in political discussions among immigrants who had been in Canada fewer than 10 years.

One question addressed by this research was whether there were differences in political participation among different generations of Canadians. Did longer-established Canadians participate more extensively than new Canadians? As the authors report, "[t]he results did not support the idea that there is a linear progression of increased political participation with number of generations in the country" (387). On the contrary, "Fourth and fifth generation Canadians were, if anything *below average* in the two kinds of electoral activities [i.e. voting and contacting politicians]" (Ibid.)

Further, on generational patterns, Chui et al. point out that political involvement tends to peak in the second-generation category with respect to almost all measures of political participation. The authors offer some speculative reasons for this heightened participation for the second generation that might be tested in further research. While immigrants may be motivated to participate in politics, their preoccupation with more immediate concerns such as economic survival, affordable housing, language training, and settlement may dampen their participation in Canadian politics. "The motivation for involvement may be passed on" to the second generation, who will not have the same structural impediments to political involvement as their immigrant parents (391).

The generational patterns in political involvement in the Chui et al. study suggest the need to question the assimilationist framework that underpins much of the literature in Canada and elsewhere on the political behaviour of immigrants. This framework implicitly assumes that non-immigrants, particularly "more deeply rooted" Canadians of British and French origins, are the ideal citizens against whose political behaviour immigrants should be measured and assessed. Yet the results of this study "did not support the idea that there is a linear progression of increased political participation with number of generations in the country" (375).

**2. Voting Studies and Electoral Strategies**

A subset of mass political participation research on immigrants and ethnocultural/visible minorities focuses on their voting behaviour. As Mishler and Clarke (1995) state, "[v]oting in periodic elections, whether at the national, provincial, or local levels, is among the most common and widely recognized avenues for citizen participation in Canada, as in other western democracies." Participation in the "low-intensity" activity of voting in electoral politics can be viewed as an important indicator of the integration of immigrants into the "mainstream" of Canadian political life (Wood, 1981:177).

With the notable exceptions of the studies mentioned above, research on the impact of ethnicity on contemporary voting behaviour in Canada has focused primarily on French-English differences and has relegated voters from other ethnic communities to a miscellaneous "Other" category. Generally speaking, even recent voting studies tend to view "social status" and socio-economic factors (including occupation, income and education) as the principal forces structuring participation (Mishler and Clarke, 1995: 139).

Ethnicity and language tend to be conflated such that ethnic differences are treated only in terms of Anglophone-Francophone differences (Ibid.). The tendency to

ignore or aggregate groups whose national origins are neither British nor French was noted in the review by Jean Laponce (1994) of articles examining ethnic voting and party preference in three academic journals over the period 1970-91: the *Canadian Journal of Political Science, Canadian Ethnic Studies,* and the *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology.*

The only groups studied at least twice in these journals over this period were Ukrainians, First Nations, West Indians, Japanese, Dutch, Icelandic and Jews (192). In comparing coverage provided to voting behaviour of ethnic groups, Laponce notes that the CES and CRSA were both "more sensitive to the community aspects of ethnicity" than the CJPS and more likely to use "more anthropologically meaningful categories such as Cree, Japanese, or German" (Ibid.)

In contrast, the CJPS articles were more likely to use "catch-all geographical classifications with little, if any, ethnic meaning...such as Northern European, Southern European, Eastern European" (Ibid.)

In extending his examination to a wider range of publications, thereby forming a link between the two descriptors "vote" and "ethnic," Laponce notes that his observations regarding the study of the ethnic vote in Canada remain unchanged. In particular, smaller minorities and those who define themselves simply as "Canadian" tend to be ignored (195).

A key problem in election studies is the reliance on surveys in which ethnicity and race were not a primary focus, and where ethnicity is assumed to be equated with country of origin of respondents or their ancestors (as opposed to more subjective measures of ethnic identity) (Laponce, 1994).

A more meaningful picture of the electoral behaviour of different ethnic groups can be obtained in constituency-based studies focusing on particular communities. Such case studies examine whether ethnic communities adopt electoral strategies in order to influence the outcome of an election, particular candidate, and political policy.

Electoral strategies can include forming one's own party, nominating independent candidates, voting as a bloc, and electing candidates of ethnic origin within the established political parties (Pelletier, 1991:121; Crewe, 1983).

These community- and constituency-based studies reveal that ethnocultural minorities have not formed independent parties either on a single community or coalition of communities basis. Indeed, Kymlicka has suggested that "the two parties in Canada which are closest to being ethnic parties were created by and for those of English and French ancestry — namely, the Parti/Bloc Québécois, whose support is overwhelmingly found amongst Québecers with French ancestry; and the Reform party,

whose support is concentrated amongst WASPs" (*sic*) (Kymlicka, 1997:4).[5] The tendency for ethnic groups in Canada to choose among existing, established parties has been noted in other societies such as the U.S., Australia and Britain (Forrest, 1988; Anwar, 1988).

In his study of the Jewish electorate in Québec provincial politics, 1927-39, Jedwab (1986) shows how bloc voting by the Jewish voters in Montreal resulted in the election of the first Jewish Conservative candidate in the 1938 election. The author concludes that in this provincial election, the "minority desire for a Jewish spokesman...transcended all other political considerations" (7).

In other provincial elections, however, different voting patterns emerged such that the Jewish vote was split in part by class lines and between newer and more established members of the community.

In a similar vein, Wood's (1981) study of South Asian electoral strategies in Vancouver South shows how an ethnic community may support the federal party, such as the Liberals, whose immigration policies brought them to Canada, but that such support is unstable. Thus, whereas in the 1974 federal election, almost 62% of South Asian (primarily Sikh) respondents in a (non-representative sample) survey stated that they had voted for the Liberals, the 1979 federal election resulted in a three-way split between the Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, and the New Democratic Party. In both elections there was a gap between South Asian and non-South Asian voting preferences. The author suggests the fracturing of the vote within this community may be partially accounted for in terms of class divisions - such as the support given to the NDP by unskilled and skilled labourers, and the growth in support of the Tories by "the burgeoning of the East Indian professional and business class" (198).

Wood's study also examined the electoral strategies of South Asians in provincial elections. In the 1979 B.C. elections, South Asians threw their support behind the NDP, managing to nominate a South Asian candidate. The election of Socred candidates in Vancouver South meant there was a risk in this community's strategy of attempting to maximize their influence through consolidation of support behind one party (198). A significant aspect of this research, consistent with Black's (1982, 1987) and Chui et al.'s (1991) research on immigrant electoral participation, is Wood's finding that South Asians are "not notably more apathetic about or alienated from the electoral politics of the dominant society than [non-South Asians]" (198). This finding is particularly notable given the history of racism in B.C. against South Asians, the absence of traditional links

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[5] Kymlicka underestimates the degree to which the traditional national parties were based on ethnic appeal to the French and British in Canada. In one authoritative interpretation of the federal party system's preoccupation with a "bicultural definition of politics," Brodie and Jenson (1988:41-47; 1989) argue that the Liberals, unable to differentiate themselves from the other bourgeois party, the Progressive Conservatives, realized the potential of religious and linguistic allegiances as a basis for building a party and sought to appease the nationalist sentiment in French Québec. In contrast, the Progressive Conservatives fought electoral campaigns by solidifying their base among Anglophone and largely Anglo-Celtic Canadians. But in large part because of the Liberals' more expansive immigration policies, and Tory nativism and repressive policies towards immigrants, the Liberal Party has traditionally been the recipient of ethnic minority support.

to an almost all-white political system, and the limited historical political influence in B.C. of Asian communities.

### 3. Political 'Elite' Participation and Representation

Several recent studies have examined the representation of ethnic minorities - and particularly visible minorities - as candidates and in positions of political office at municipal, provincial, and federal levels. In this research, there is generally an acknowledgement of the complex relationships that exist between *statistical* or numerical representation and *substantive* representation (Abu-Laban, 1997:87; Black and Lakhani, 1997:14; Stasiulis and Abu-Laban, 1991:5, 10-11).

Generally speaking, access to elected office for individuals from historically marginalized groups has traditionally been greatest at the municipal level, where the financial costs incurred by candidates tend to be lower and the impediment of political party structures is less prevalent. Thus, several western cities elected mayors of Ukrainian origin, while Toronto had two Jewish mayors during the late 1950s and early 1960s (Burnet and Palmer, 1988:175). In some cities, however, such as Vancouver, Winnipeg and Montreal, ethnic and racial minorities have encountered hostile lobby groups and political parties at the local level, histories of minority exclusion, and the tenacity of negative stereotypes denigrating visible minority and recent immigrant groups. Thus, Abu-Laban (1997a:85) notes that "the first Chinese-Canadian councillor in Vancouver was not elected until 1981, a remarkable fact given the very deep roots of the Chinese community in Vancouver" (86). In the 1993 municipal election, only two of ten seats on the Vancouver City Council were won by visible minorities (Ibid).

One of the first efforts to study the ethnic origins of elected members in the federal House of Commons was undertaken by Roman March for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Royal Commission, 1970). March, whose methods of ethnic origin classification are unclear (Black and Lakhani, 1997:fn.16), found that between 1867 and 1964, a total of only 97 individuals of non-British, non-French origin were MPs. Among the minority communities, Germans, and to a lesser extent, Ukrainians and Jews, had the largest number of MPs.

Other groups, particularly visible minorities, had weaker or negligible membership in the federal legislature. In fact, it is striking that from Confederation until the mid-1960s, the non-British, non-French groups became increasingly *under*-represented in the House of Commons in comparison with their growing proportions in the Canadian population (Manzer, 1974:251).

In recent federal elections, the statistical representation of ethnic and visible minorities has improved. Pelletier (1991:129) states that representation of ethnic minorities increased "significantly and continuously from 9.4 percent in 1965 to 16.3 percent in 1988." The increase was primarily attributable to a growth in participation of Europeans, and was much smaller for visible minorities. The latter varied in their representation from 0.8% in 1968 to 2.0% in 1988 (Ibid.) Members of ethnic minorities were overwhelmingly male during this period (114 of 120). Regionally, the majority of ethnic minorities were elected in Ontario (40 %), followed by Alberta (13.3 %), Quebec

and British Columbia (11.7% each), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (10.8% each). Only one ethnic minority MP was elected in the Maritimes and one in the Territories during this period (Ibid.: 130-131).

In their meticulous study of numerical representation in the 35th Parliament, Black and Lakhani (1997) illustrate the inroads made by ethnic minorities into the House of Commons. A major finding in their research, which relies on biographical and surname analysis, as well as a survey of parliamentarians, is that the level of minority presence in the House of Commons had by 1993 nearly corresponded to the incidence of non-British, non-French minorities in the population at large. Thus, while MPs of the British-only and French-only origins exceeded their proportions of the general population, the percentage (24.7%) of parliamentarians whose origins fell completely *outside* the two majority groups and Aboriginal origins compared fairly well to their level in the population at large (27%).

In contrast, visible minorities continued to be starkly under-represented in comparison with their population base. In 1993, only 13 (4.4%) of all MPs were classified as visible minorities, in comparison with 9.4% of the total population (the figure provided by Statistics Canada for 1991).

In partisan terms, 12 of the 13 visible minorities, and 51 of 71 MPs with minority origins, and all 21 of South Europeans (primarily of Italian origin) were elected as Liberals. Six of nine NDP MPs were of minority or mixed (majority-minority) origins. The Reform Party had elected 15 of 52 members, drawn primarily from north and east European origin communities. The Bloc Québécois stands out as a party of MPs almost exclusively of French ancestry (53 of 54 MPs).

In regional terms, minority MPs were thinly represented in Quebec and especially Atlantic Canada; minority MPs of north and east European origins were concentrated in the Prairies; and visible minorities were strongly concentrated in Ontario (Toronto) and British Columbia (Vancouver) (Black and Lakhani, 1997:20-21). In separate analyses, Black (1997a, 1997b) has studied the notable number of women with minority origins elected in 1993: of the 53 women MPs elected, 33 had majority ancestry, eight had mixed majority-minority origins, 11 had minority-only (including two visible minority) backgrounds, and one had Aboriginal origins (Black and Lakhani, 1997:21). At 6% of all MPs, the 19 minority women in the 35th parliament, however, remained greatly under-represented (Black, 1997b:20).

No similar study has as yet been undertaken of numerical representation of minorities in the most recent (36th) Parliament. The Montreal-based Centre for Research Action on Race Relations (CRARR), however, has compiled data on 16 visible minority MPs elected to the House of Commons in 1997. The majority of these MPs (10) are Liberals, five are from the Reform Party, and the remaining one is a New Democrat. Four are women. Other data suggest that CRARR may have under-counted the number of visible minorities, which more likely totals 18.

If we accept the latter figure, visible minorities comprise 6.1% of parliamentarians, compared with 9.4% of the population at large, a notable increase

from 1993. The appointment of Herb Dhaliwal, an Indo-Canadian, as Minister of National Revenue also increased "non-white minority representation within the federal cabinet, when taking into account the three Secretaries of State from visible minorities and aboriginal communities: the Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Children and Youth), the Hon. Raymond Chan (Asia-Pacific Affairs) and the Hon. Hedy Fry (Multiculturalism and Status of Women)" (CRARR, 1997). Other aspects of the 36th Parliament remarked upon by CRARR included the absence of visible minority MPs from the Bloc Québécois and from the much-reduced Progressive Conservative caucus.

The substantial increase in ethnic minority and visible minority representation among MPs observed in the 1993 and 1997 federal elections represents an acceleration in trends begun in the mid-1980s. Stasiulis and Abu-Laban (1990; 1991) analyzed the mobilization of ethnocultural and visible minority communities preceding the 1984 and 1988 federal elections, which became a major focus of mass media attention, especially with regard to Liberal nomination battles in Metropolitan Toronto and other Ontario ridings. The practice of rounding up blocs of ethnic votes for competing candidates (most often of British origin) had a lengthy history in Toronto, with its many ethnic neighbourhoods. The novel feature of the 1984 and (particularly) the 1988 elections lay in the aggressive pursuit of nominations and election, most notably within the Liberal Party, by ethnic minority (chiefly visible minority and South European) candidates. This strategy, designed to make inroads into the national political elite, was observed also to take place in some ridings outside Ontario — such as Vancouver, Calgary, and the Montreal area, where Italians formed a sizeable population in certain ridings. Ethnic community mobilization in the nomination process was also reported to have taken place in Winnipeg, where ethnic loyalties had long been an issue in provincial politics (Stasiulis and Abu-Laban, 1990:589; Wiseman and Taylor, 1974, 1979, 1982; Taylor and Wiseman, 1977).

In the study prepared for the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, Stasiulis and Abu-Laban (1991) drew from interviews with minority MPs, unsuccessful candidates and party officials to identify the barriers to the participation of ethnic and visible minorities at higher levels of electoral politics. A significant structural hurdle identified in this study inhibiting ethnic minority nominations was the "incumbency" factor, which discourages placement of minority candidates in winnable or safe seats (64-65; see also Pelletier, 1991). Other barriers include conventional networks of recruitment of activists heavily reliant on personal, ethnic/racial networks; financial barriers for more newly arrived, those facing discrimination and those concentrated in lower-income jobs; and cultural hurdles such as the bicultural framework within the Canadian party system, which relegates questions of representation of "the others" to much lower rank of importance.

The mass media were also widely perceived to have done damage to the complex issue of ethnic minority political representation by focusing almost solely on the sensationalist aspects of nomination and delegate selection processes. As the authors point out, certain aspects of nomination processes — identified as "packing" of nomination meetings with "instant" party members and or riding association "take-overs" (which became the conventional discourse of political journalists in the late 1980s) — were wrongly attributed to ethnic and visible minority communities rather than being

portrayed as traditional features of party politics (Stasiulis and Abu-Laban, 1991:24, 70-71).

The Stasiulis and Abu-Laban (1991) study also examined affirmative measures taken by the then three major federal parties (Liberal, Progressive Conservative and NDP) to encourage the participation of minorities within party organization and decision-making. The three parties differed in their stance on affirmative measures, and there were also significant differences at provincial and federal levels of party organization.

The most extensive affirmative action policy for visible and ethnocultural minorities existed in the NDP. The Liberals had developed an "ethnic satellite" structure in Ontario at the provincial level, but Liberal minority MPs opposed formal affirmative action at the federal level. The Tories had established a Multicultural Advisory Committee to assist Ontario ridings in recruiting ethnic candidates in heavily ethnic ridings.

The recent election of more ethnic minorities (and especially visible minorities) into the Reform Party underscores the complexity of the relationship between *substantive* (e.g., party policy on issues of concern to ethnic and visible minorities) and *numerical representation* of these groups. The Reform Party is widely known to take stands that are antithetical to multiculturalism policy; it favours a restrictive immigration policy and a "colour-blind" stance on equality issues that downplays the historical exclusion and contemporary reality of racism in Canadian society. The rejection of multiculturalism by visible minority Reform MPs must be placed within the larger context of the assault on multiculturalism policy from both those who favour stronger anti-racist measures, and those espousing anti-immigrant and racist sentiments.

Many ethnic minority Liberal MPs have been outspoken in their opposition to the ghettoizing implications of multiculturalism policy (Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992). As Black and Lakhani (1997:21) suggest, it is difficult to believe that the ethnic and visible minority MPs in the Reform caucus "approach the world of politics based on any promotion of their own ancestral origins." The new visible minority Reform MPs arrived in Ottawa with strong backgrounds in business. They are more likely to have identified in class terms with the neo-liberal economic and financial platforms of the Reform Party, and with an immigration policy that favours "investor immigrants," and were thus undeterred by the party's "all-white image" (Simpson, 1977:A22).

Black and Lakhani (Ibid:24, fn.41) ironically observe that a "demise in the saliency of the minority agenda" has occurred at the same time that Parliament is witnessing record numbers of minority group MPs. This observation suggests the need for further research on the complex relationship between numerical and substantive representation.

## 4. Current State of Research — Identifying Gaps and Biases

In Canada, immigration plays a major continuing role, forms a large proportion of the population, and has significantly altered the racial and ethnic diversity of urban centres in particular. All the same, there has been a dearth of research focussed specifically on the experiences of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in electoral politics and the Canadian political process. This neglect is compounded by the (at best) uneven attention paid to questions of race, ethnicity and immigration by political science, the discipline devoted to the study of political participation (Abu-Laban, 1997b, Taylor, 1996). With few exceptions, Canadian political scientists have tended to consider "ethnic politics" almost entirely in terms of "French-English" relations, with an intensified interest in First Nations politics in recent years. The study of immigrant and ethnocultural/racial minority activity in Canadian politics has thus received scant empirical or theoretical attention, largely reaching tentative, contested, and extremely partial conclusions.

As Peter Li (1996:33) has observed about research more generally on immigration, much of the study of political participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities implicitly adopts a "benchmark." This indicator uses the behavioural standards of Canadian-born or ethnically dominant Canadians to gauge the political performance of immigrants and minorities. The empirical findings suggest that while new immigrants are less likely to immediately participate in Canadian politics, the levels of immigrant participation over time are as high as for non-immigrants.

Moreover, as suggested by Chui et al. (1991), Canadians who grow up in immigrant households are more highly motivated to participate than third- and fourth-generation Canadians. Academic opinion is divided on whether Canadians as a whole are relatively politically active or more akin to political "spectators" in comparison with residents of other democratic countries. This suggests, therefore, a pressing need to reevaluate the assumption that the political behaviour of non-immigrants or ethnically/racially dominant Canadians forms the normative ideal.

Important inroads have been made to document more accurately the numerical representation of ethnic and visible minorities, especially in the House of Commons. There is a similar gap in systematic study of minority representation at other levels of government including municipal councils, and provincial and territorial legislatures (see Balthazar, 1996:89 for Quebec). At the federal level, in aggregate terms, non-British, non-French origin groups are fairly well represented, while visible minorities continue to be under-represented. The declining positive attention Parliament gives to political issues that have conventionally been identified as of concern to visible minorities and immigrant communities (such as immigration, employment equity and multiculturalism) indicates a need to pursue closer study of the processes that hinder substantive representation of minority issues (Black and Lakhani, 1997:24).

While research into political participation makes some mention of the socially constructed nature of ethnicity and race, these aspects of identity, culture, communities and political institutions are rarely problematized and are treated as discrete variables or "'things' in themselves which we encounter" (Taylor, 1996:884), particularly in "Others"

and not in the "mainstream." Although recent research (Black and Lakhani, 1997) attempts to include data on Canadians of mixed origins, most research into political participation is oblivious to the political implications of the hybrid identities among a growing number of Canadians who are products of mixed parentage of majority/minority and First World/Third World origins.

Over the last 25 years, immigrants are more likely to originate from South and Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, the Pacific (and especially Asia, rather than from European countries. Moreover, there is now immense diversity within and between groups relating to such factors as migration and settlement histories, generational composition, socio-economic status, official language competence, and in comparison with white British and French populations, "racial" and cultural distinctiveness. This diversity renders generalizations about immigrant and ethnocultural minority political participation problematic and suggests the need for undertaking more nuanced strategies for research on immigrant and ethnocultural participation.

Similarly, research on immigrant political participation has not yet examined the political implications of the circularity of population movements that pass through Canada's global cities, such as transnational economic elites who enter Canada through Canadian business immigration schemes, and various categories of service workers in Canada on temporary employment authorizations. For some circular migrants, participation in public life occurs in both their homeland and their new land, allowing these individuals to become proficient political, economic and cultural mediators for their communities. In light of such political phenomena, conventional categories in immigration research (such as the concept of "host society") need to be redrawn.

Research in the area of political participation has tended to focus on the individual characteristics and behaviour of immigrants and ethnic minorities. This individual orientation, consistent with the scientific, empiricist approach to North American politics, has not dealt well with the collective dimensions of migration, settlement and community processes.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some members of ethnocultural and visible minorities have used experience in immigrant and minority community work to build a political base for themselves.[6] The relationships between political activism within minority community (including homeland-oriented) participation and participation in electoral politics are not merely individual phenomena; rather, they also say something about the collective strategies undertaken by different communities (Wihtol de Wenden, 1995).

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[6] Thus, Agnew (1996:162) notes that Winnie Ng, an activist in immigrant women's issues, won nomination as a candidate for the federal New Democratic Party.

The study of the political participation of immigrants and ethnocultural and visible minorities must recognize these groups as socially, economically, culturally and even juridically diversified groups. The stark under-representation of ethnic minority (and especially visible minority) women suggests the need for further research on the gender aspects of ethnic/racial minority political participation (and on the racialized aspects of women's political activity). In addition, several scholars have pointed out how the category of "visible minority" is sociologically meaningless, in the sense that "visible minorities have nothing in common with each other, except their visibility to the majority" (Synnott and Howes, 1996:145). Yet individual-oriented assumptions of the study of politics in Canada have inhibited a more nuanced and diversified understanding of minority politics.

Focusing on the individual characteristics of ethnocultural minorities also omits consideration of the structural and cultural impediments to participation that exist in political parties and legislative (and other societal) institutions. Research is needed to identify the mechanisms and accompanying discourses within these institutions that continue to privilege historically dominant groups and discriminate against visible and ethnic minorities.

While the Canadian policy of granting citizenship to landed immigrants after three years has been called "generous" (Pelletier, 1991:110), the fact that some groups (Somali and Afghani refugees, foreign domestic workers entering under the Live-in Caregiver Program) must wait considerably longer has an important bearing on their political participation in Canada. These and other groups from the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and Pacific region are frequently portrayed in the mass media as criminals or as people without a legitimate reason for being here.

In this sense, research into political participation must draw upon the growing body of multi-disciplinary research that has sought to understand the many forms and types of racism and discrimination. Such research might also examine the political subjectivities and agendas of immigrant and minority communities in relation to nationalist agendas of other communities (Francophone Québécois, First Nations) that define themselves as oppressed or politically marginalized. This research should also be shaped to root the findings about individual political subjectivities and behaviour of immigrants and ethnocultural/visible minorities in a broader understanding of the shifting ideal-type political subjectivity that is expected of citizens in liberal democracies wrought by restructuring in both the "post-fordist" economy and the state.[7]

Finally, an understanding of the political integration of various immigrant, ethnocultural and visible minority groups in Canada would be greatly enhanced by

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[7] Elsewhere (Stasiulis, 1997:202), I have argued that, "The current directions in state intervention have...fundamentally altered the ideal-type subjectivity expected of citizens in liberal democratic states. Citizens are urged by their governments to become more self-disciplined, infinitely flexible and multi-skilled, more entrepreneurial and resilient in riding the roller-coaster vagaries of business cycles, technological change, and restructuring the labour market and public institutions such as hospitals and schools. This emphasis on individual freedoms and responsibilities also discourages or clashes with the development of particular types of collective solidarities such as membership within trade unions and oppositional movements..."

comparative analyses of Canada with other countries. Yasmeen Abu-Laban (1997b) has embarked on a review of similarities and differences in political participation of female and male immigrants in Canada, the United States, and countries of western Europe, based on existing literature. There is a need to pursue more empirical, comparative, inter-disciplinary studies that are better informed by theoretical debates. Such research should be rigorous, yet still allow for qualitative as well as quantitative methodologies flexible enough to capture the range of politics engaged in by minority communities. Future research agendas should also examine the bi-directional influence of immigrant and minority political action, on the one hand, and state and societal institutions on the other (see Ireland, 1994; Miller, 1981).

Current research has seriously limited the understanding of minority politics by adopting a definition of political participation that is confined to electoral politics and the official politics of the state. As immigrants and minorities engage in many other kinds of political activities, research might profitably investigate why they choose these other venues.

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## Workshop 1

### Participation of Immigrants, Members of Ethnocultural Communities and Visible Minorities in Canadian Political Life

Moderator: Jean Laponce, University of British Columbia, Université d'Ottawa
Summary : France Gagnon, doctorate student, Universit6 de Montréal

The workshop comprised a series of round-table discussions, especially during the first part of each session. The first theme, which participants raised spontaneously, was the definition of political participation. Participants went on to discuss the methodological aspects of research. In conclusion, the facilitator suggested they adopt a few recommendations for research, which he presented in the form of "commandments."

**Definitions**

Participants raised the issue of defining political participation right from the start. They spoke of the need for studies on how individuals themselves define their political participation. They stressed the importance of conducting research into the characteristics of immigrants and the programs and policies that influence political participation. Participants noted the lack of long-term studies portraying immigrant settlement and of comparative data in the research.

Following Daiva Stasiulis' presentation, there were numerous comments on the issue of broadening the definition of political participation. Recommendations were raised to widen the definition of political participation to include both social participation and nonparticipation, which some argued is in itself a form of political participation. To arrive at an accurate definition of political participation, the question of what constitutes civic, social and political non-participation must also be examined. Citizens' reluctance to become involved in community life must therefore be given the same attention as others' willingness to do so.

Participants emphasized the need to examine and take into consideration the various styles of participation, the quality of participation and its effects.

On the effects of participation, one person noted the importance of distinguishing between statistical and qualitative participation. The symbolic meaning of participation, namely the election of representatives, and its possible impact on policy are two separate, not necessarily related, issues.

The quality of participation must also be examined. It was pointed out that participation in minority-controlled institutions will not necessarily serve the interests of the majority of citizens. Is this type of involvement promoted in order to control the public or is it truly an instrument of public empowerment? Is participation synonymous with participation in political power?

The players who define the participation agenda were also a discussion topic. Who is in a position of power? It was pointed out that participation is often organized around elite groups of people.

On the different styles of participation, one representative of an ethnocultural community highlighted the various types of political participation by discussing the complex relationship between ethnocuitural communities and political participation. For example, when immigrants arrive in Montr6al, they will usually get in touch with their community of origin. They relate how they been received and how they are integrating into life in the city. Representatives of this community may then inform the various government agencies concerned.

Participants in the workshop also stressed the importance of identifying the structural and political factors that prompt members of ethnocultural communities to become involved. For example, might a change of policy encourage political participation? What issues will galvanize immigrants into action? Participants commented on the lack of literature on these substantive issues, which are of interest to small communities.

Some people then turned to the question of parliamentary representation. They recommended that political parties and conventions be organized in ways that will reduce the under-representation of members of ethnocultural communities in the National Assembly and Qu6bec's public service (where the 2% representation of members of ethnocultural communities falls short of the 12% target).

The importance of identifying barriers to participation was raised. To understand the participation process is to understand the obstacles to immigrant participation.

Several people reiterated the importance of distinguishing between the two different visions of participation: the first sees political participation as an indicator of social integration, while the other views it as an indicator of democracy.

**Methodology**

With respect to methodology, several persons felt it important to consider how the level of participation could be measured. The idea of using a reference group to establish comparisons was raised by delegates from organizations. They pointed out the danger of using the majority group as a reference point.

They decried the lack of comparative data on political participation by immigrants. (Data on political participation by immigrants in other countries would be useful, for example, as would comparative studies of countries where voting is mandatory and those where it is no.)

Another problematic methodological issue was raised. It involves looking at formal means of integrating immigrants (e.g., neighbourhood councils) and informal means when assessing ethnic participation.

This issue raises the problem of identifying immigrants on neighbourhood councils in neighbourhoods that are ethnically diverse. Participants underscored the fact, and with considerable disappointment, that studies do not generally address the hybrid identities of some citizens.

People observed that studies of political participation pay little attention to the collective settlement of immigrants. It is important to understand the conditions that favour group mobilization; they have an impact on political participation and on policies that could induce immigrant participation in the life of society.

**Conclusion**

The facilitator suggested adopting the following recommendations for future research:

- go beyond the English-French split;
- do not use aggregate categories at the level of generalities;
- study participation at the community, not the individual level;
- electoral participation is lowered not only by external, but also internal factors;
- more qualitative studies - holistic approaches, not just quantitative studies;
- do not limit political participation to electoral participation; and
- take care in using Census data (they can give a false image of the situation).

Participants expressed disagreement with some of these recommendations:

Some participants said that in Qu6bec, the English-French split cannot be disregarded. One person argued that it is essential to study the linguistic division in Qu6bec even if, in methodological terms, the static Allophone variable does not take account of the inter-generational variable. Participants observed that studies focus on the English and French languages because the Allophone variable does not provide these nuances.

However, participants also noted that linguistic affinity is not the same as affinity of interest; there is a danger of relying on linguistic categcries when doing research.

Participants discussed the importance of considering social class and gender as basic criteria in social research. Some insisted that this recommendation should be added to the list of "commandments."

# Civic Participation, Awareness, Knowledge and Skills

by

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Second National Metropolis Conference

Immigrants and Civic Participation:
Contemporary Policy and Research Issues

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## Introduction

This paper will review the recent literature focusing on correlatives of civic involvement in Canada and in other democratic societies. In carrying out this task, we have discovered many dimensions of civic involvement, e.g., participation, awareness, skills, and knowledge.[8] This subject is an integral part of the mandate of the renewed multicultural program, which identifies one of its policy goals as the development of an individual's capacity and opportunity to participate in shaping the future of his or her community and country.

I do not plan to discuss the controversies about a "discourse of civil society" that have been raging over the past three decades. Thus, I will not revisit controversies between the defenders of the elite versus the participatory model of democracy, between the "rights-oriented liberalism" and "communitarianism," or between the neo-conservative defenders of a free market versus those defending the welfare state. Rather, this paper summarizes the recent, extant literature on civic participation, awareness, knowledge, and skills.[9]

## Civic Involvement

Traditionally, it has been desirable for the effective functioning of Western democratic systems that the individual be disposed to play an active part in the working of the system — as voter, community participant, worker, activist, political party member. It is felt that each citizen has to be persuaded that he/she has a responsibility to be informed and be an active participant in the democratic system. In the end, all members of society should be able to judge the efficacy of various points of view and act on the basis of what seemed to be the wisest course of action. This would allow each citizen to make wise decisions and society could function in a stable manner.[10]

Civic involvement may be evident in a number of settings. The most common are voluntary community organizations.[11] These are geographically based, operating in specific places, volunteer driven, with a primary resource of "human capital," locally

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8 The review of literature revealed a body of literature focusing on civic awareness and knowledge of children. However, for purposes of the present paper, this research has not been included.

9 The controversy over civic participation during the 50's and 60's both in Canada and in the United States precipitated considerable research and debate. However, since that time, little systematic research has been carried out on the issue.

10 Today, only three Charter rights are expressly given to Canadian citizens. These are: the right to vote and be qualified for membership in the House of Commons or a provincial legislature, mobility rights and minority-language education rights. Other rights are conferred variously on "everyone," "any person," every individual or any member of the public in Canada. The Charter also constrains governments capacity to confer benefits or impose restriction on the basis of citizenship.

11 Participation has been measured using such indicators as, cleanup and beautification programs, home repair and improvement programs, building projects, provision of services (joint or with government agency), voting, political action, and other forms of membership in voluntary associations.

initiated, responding to local conditions, and focusing on specific problems confronting the local population. When operating at their peak, these organizations transform isolated individuals into public citizens and contribute to the stability of society.[12] At a more specific level, they empower individuals and communities to gain mastery over their affairs.

Before proceeding further, we need to be conceptually clear in the use of our term "civic involvement" (some might call it "civic culture"). It represents the patterning of how we share a common space, common resources, and common opportunities and manage interdependence in that "company of strangers" that constitutes the public (Selman, 1991). It represents a tangle of human connections, past and future; at the same time, it defines entitlements and responsibilities.[13] We are concerned with how we manage that inter-dependence in Canada and about the role of individuals, acting singly or in concert with others, as participants or citizens within that process.[14]

There is an assumption that the building of a sense of community acts as a mechanism to stimulate the healthy development of the environment and the people who inhabit it. We are concerned how this process operates within our social and political system.[15]

After reviewing many works on the subject matter(both theoretical and empirical), it is clear that civic involvement is multi-dimensional and operates at a number of levels. For example, civic involvement may involve such mundane activities as a family discussion about government policy, a peer group discussion regarding political candidates during an election, or canvassing for a local charitable organization. It may also entail more visible actions such as supporting a candidate for political office, running for political office, participating in a referendum, lobbying government, or engaging in protest activities. The many levels of involvement may be focused on the individual, the family, local community, region or nation.

Finally, it should be noted that the context for these activities is also varied, taking place in a work setting, educational institution, ethnic community, voluntary association, religious organization or other milieu corroborating the belief that civic

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12 At the same time, it is known that the "mortality" rate of voluntary organizations exceeds 50 per cent in the first year of operation. This of course may be a result of the organization "solving" the problem confronting the local group or, upon seeing the futility of its actions, simply declining and "dying."

13 Researchers have differentiated between "quality" participation, which refers to its impacts on outcomes at multiple levels, and "scope," which focuses on frequency or duration of occurrence.

14 Social citizenship refers to those rights and duties of citizenship concerned with the welfare of people as citizens, taking welfare in a broad sense to include such things as work, education, health and quality of life.

15 The inputs-outputs approach of systems theory envisions public policy as the response of the political system to inputs, or forces brought to bear upon it from the societal environment. Other models of policy making including interest group theory, institutional and organizational approaches, and the "bureaucratic" politics model, all emphasize the importance of the political system itself. Earlier policy outputs become subsequent inputs.

involvement may be secular (political, economic) or religious in nature. Nonetheless, each context has a potential impact upon an individuals capacity and/or opportunity to participate in the future of their community or country.

We begin by presenting a general model that reveals the dynamic nature of civic involvement as well as how changing individual and structural factors impinge upon the level of participation, awareness, knowledge and skills. It also reveals the synergistic linkage between the individual and the social structure in which they operate. We then look at correlatives of civic involvement in an attempt to ferret out those social and structural factors that are related to civic involvement. Next, we look to the literature to identify those similarities and differences between native-born and immigrant Canadians with regard to civic participation, knowledge, awareness and skills.

As noted above, we will first look at those factors related to civic involvement and then turn our attention to research that has focused on its consequences.

**Why do People Participate?**

The issue of civic involvement has been of interest since the turn of the century. Social scientists have argued that involvement in one's family, private clubs, voluntary associations and the political system are necessary components of stable, well-functioning societies. This in turn is conducive to a stable democratic polity.[16] The position of Canadians (congruent with the work of Alexis de Tocqueville) is that without active participation on the part of citizens in egalitarian institutions, there will be no way to maintain the democratic character or the political culture of social and political institutions. Since modern civil society is based on egalitarian principles and universal inclusion, experience in articulating the political will and in collective decision making is crucial to the reproduction of democracy. As such, if Canadians wish to continue to live in a civil society, they must develop social associations cutting across class structures, neighbourhoods, and develop networks of mutual aid, all of which provide a collective service and promote a civil society.

Over the past two decades, a number of disciplines such as sociology, political science and social work have contributed theories and models to the study of civic awareness, knowledge, skills and participation. (See Figure 1.) The explicit assumption is that civic involvement will have a wide variety of benefits at the national, community, interpersonal and individual levels (Wandersman and Florin, 1997). For example, many times, communities, government agencies or other organizations have looked to civic involvement as a way to provide a solution to a problem, e.g., urban service delivery, health promotion, disease prevention, crime and drug abuse prevention, welfare reform, mental health service delivery.

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[16] Canadians have favoured the "peace, order and good government" approach over the "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" approach taken by our southern neighbors. We have not been discriminating in supporting "good" government and have subordinated ourselves to the community. In the end, our deference to authority has fostered a citizenry that is law abiding. However, citizenship must extend beyond mere obedience to authority. We must participate in the debates of democracy to ensure that the laws are good and fair. Only then will we achieve "good" government.

Current research suggests that individuals become involved in civic activities depending on the benefits and costs of participation. Research further stipulates that, to be effective as incentives, benefits are "selective" or "private" in that they specifically reward members for their individual contributions and are only obtainable by those who actually participate. If you cannot, or can get the rewards elsewhere (or by letting others do it), it is likely that individuals will not participate and engage in "free rider" behaviour. Selective incentives are not only material (e.g., money), but can also be nonmaterial (solidarity), such as friendship or personal satisfaction.

Research also suggests that purposive benefits, which are derived from suprapersonal goals of the organization, include such activities as bettering the community, doing one's civic duty, and fulfilling a sense of responsibility.[17]

The most active participants in voluntary organizations (e.g., leaders), are primarily motivated by purposive benefits such as working toward the improvement of the neighbourhood or community. Others have suggested that the enjoyment of leadership and organizing as well as ego gratification are important motivators. However, solidarity benefits are also important for these individuals. Material motives were found to play a relatively minimal role as motivator for the most active participants. In general, purposive motives are important initiating participation while solidarity, purposive and material motives are important for sustaining participation. Costs are negatively associated with any form of involvement. (See Figure 2.)

Within the "cost-reward" model, three factors have been identified as influencing an individual's participation in voluntary organizations. They areas follows: perception of the environment; one's social relations; and one's perceived control and empowerment within the community.

1. *Perception of environment*: Individuals judge the degree to which their environment (or a specific aspect of the environment) is positive or negative to the individual. If viewed negatively, stress and arousal result (e.g., fear of crime, lower property values) and social withdrawal from civic involvement occurs. Viewed in this light, perception of environmental problems can serve as a motivator to action since in many cases organizations are created as a response to the threat or reality of physical deterioration. Research shows there is a curvilinear relationship between perception of environmental problems and individual participation in a voluntary organizations.

2. One's social relations: This refers to social interaction with neighbours, e.g., borrowing, informal visits, help in emergency. Research shows that when people engage in and feel a sense of community, they interact more with their neighbours. Moreover, the presence of social networks within a neighbourhood helps regulate social behaviour through normative mechanism called informal social control. With the

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[17] Material benefits are tangible rewards, solidarity benefits are derived from social interactions and purposive benefits are derived from suprapersonal goals of the organization.

establishment of social norms, individuals have a clear sense of rights and responsibility that in turn motivates people to engage in civic activities.

3. *Perceived control and empowerment*: Perceived control relates to the beliefs an individual has about the relationship between actions (behaviours) and outcomes. Individuals evaluate the likelihood that their own individual efforts (or a group of people working together) can solve a specific problem. This expectancy will influence an individual's civic involvement. Research shows a similar impact is related to an individual's locus of control.

At the same time there are "pull" factors involved in moving individuals to greater civic involvement, there also are "push" factors that keep them from doing so. These barriers to civic involvement include such structural factors as receptivity of host society, levels of racism/discrimination, and the host society's beliefs about "ethnics" and/or immigrants. In addition, a number of socio-demographic factors as well as attitudes and beliefs are linked to low levels of civic awareness, knowledge, and participation. Thus, it is important to realize that the impact of each independent variable is not simply one that ranges from no relationship to a positive one. In some cases, low levels of the independent variable (such as education) seem to have a negative effect on the civic involvement or awareness of the individual.

**Correlatives of Civic Involvement**

We now move to the more general literature on "citizen participation" and "civic involvement" in an attempt to isolate those factors that are theorized to have an impact upon civic awareness, knowledge, participation, and skills.[18] There is a considerable body of theory regarding the issue of civic involvement while at the same time, very limited empirical data to support those theoretical claims. Figure 3 identifies those hypothesized and empirically tested independent variables related to one or more of the many dimensions of civic involvement. Standard socio-demographic factors have been the most cited contributors to civic involvement, although the theoretical rationale for how these variables affect civic involvement is seldom presented. Nevertheless, most researchers point to the contextual environment in which individuals operate and these also have an impact on civic involvement. Unfortunately, these structural factors have not been well researched.

Another set of variables are those defined as "beliefs or attitudes." For example, researchers have found that many individuals have "private regarding" attitudes that cause them to act in their own special interest and withdraw from the process of public participation. Others have attitudes of "non-participation" or practice a "culture of silence" that present barriers to civic involvement.

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[18] Researchers have identified four types of organizations that have influence an individuals civic participation: institution directed (committed to the welfare of the institution), volunteer group-directed (committed to the organization itself), problem directed (committed to the mission of the organization,) and social change directed (committed to certain social ideals and a particular vision of the future).

Finally, most researchers point to time as an important mediating variable. As individuals mature, become educated, gain status in the community, their participation, knowledge, skills, and awareness in civic activities change. Similarly, as social structure evolves over time, the impact of specific structures varies. Thus contextual variables form an important envelope in which individuals operate.

The results in Figure 3 show that many individual factors show a positive relation to civic participation. However, other dimensions of the concept have not been subjected to empirical testing. What is lacking in this review is an analysis of "paths," multiple impacts, and "multi-collinearity" of the individual variables.

**Immigrant vs. Native-Born Civic Involvement**

There is a belief that deep cultural and value differences between immigrants and native-born Canadians make the successful integration of recent immigrant groups very difficult (Weinfeld, 1994). Government today takes the position, as did Marshall (1965), that integration assumes there are core values of a culture that are more or less stable and a process of incorporation of different groups will take place within a common national community. At the same time, we have taken the position that one can be ethnic and yet share a common citizenship, a position that many European countries have yet to debate (e.g., France and Germany).

Most research clearly demonstrates that social membership is obtained by immigrants gradually over a long period of time. It is the result of participation in the civil society, in the daily life, in the labour and housing markets, in leisure time activities, and associational life. Immigrants become members not by way of formal decisions, but as a matter of fact; they begin to behave as members of society after some minimum period of residence, generally regarded as between three and five years.[19]

Researchers focusing on the civic involvement of immigrants hypothesize differences between immigrants and native-born Canadians.[20] Figure 4 reveals those variables that reveal different levels of civic involvement for native-born and immigrant Canadians.

**Impacts of Civic Involvement**

The final section of this paper focuses on the consequences of civic involvement. Research shows that participation in civil society (such as voluntary organizations) provides opportunities for learning about public issues and acquiring skills, knowledge and practical experience of relevance to the role of functioning as a citizen. People who gain knowledge about specific aspects of our society (such as social or public policy)

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[19] Canada pays lip service both to the principle of inclusiveness and to the idea of rights to remain in a country based on a social membership established by long residence.

[20] The results presented do not differentiate between voluntary immigrants and refugees. This lack of distinction results from the research designs used that do not differentiate between the two.

also gain deeper convictions about the values that are at work in our society and how they are applied.

Finally, civic involvement allows people to see how the processes of social and political change work and how it is possible to have impact on the direction of change.[21]

In summary, most research on citizen participation in community organizations (of all types and forms) has shown a positive impact on: (a) the community; (b) organizations; and © individuals. The specific variables are outlined in Figure 5.

**Conclusion**

The problem facing Canadians is *how can we build civic involvement?* How can inclusion, shared identity and political unity occur when diversity reigns? We must remember that nominal civic participation is the membership of a state, while citizenship means generalized rights. This statement embodies the idea that membership in a society refers to several subsystems — the economic, social, political. Furthermore, it illustrates the inter-connectivity of the subsystems. For example, when economic subsystems are being globalized, the political subsystems — the basically unaltered territorial nation states — tend to lose some of their political control. International migration is one important example of this "disjuncture" between the economic and the political: against the principles of liberal democracy a growing number of permanent residents are excluded from civic membership.[22]

Globalization presents people with an unending stream of products, ideas, and values that threaten to destabilize links between the citizen and the state, unless they are constrained by the positive identification with the governing body that an enriched practice of citizenship can generate (Kaplan, 1993). Our argument is that "community as a place"[23] is disappearing, and taking its place is "community as space." As a result, Canadians must rethink the concept of "community" and take steps by which civic involvement acknowledges this new conceptualization of "community."

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[21] The use of study circles has been used by some countries, e.g., Sweden, to involve the public in civic activities.

[22] Civil societies can always be more "just" and civil disobedience is just one way of achieving this utopian justness. Past acts of civil disobedience, workers strikes, sit-ins, boycotts, were all once illegal but we now consider them to be normal. Civil disobedience, for some, constitutes a litmus test for democracy.

[23] A sense of "place" or community refers to the relationship between the individual and the social structure.

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**Figure 1. Theories of Citizenship and their Salient Attributes***

| | |
|---|---|
| The Right: | - beyond entitlement<br>- self supporting in the market place<br>- do not look to the state to solve individual problems |
| The Left: | - more individual freedom<br>- welfare safe citizenship<br>- reliance on macro-economic policy<br>- rights precede responsibilities |
| Civil Society: | - civility and self-restraint<br>- reliance upon voluntary associations<br>- government to promote network of associations |
| Feminism: | - strutual barriers imposed upon women<br>- ideology of "protection" over "acquisition"<br>- virtues of the private sphere, e.g., family |
| Liberal Virtue: | - political responsibility<br>- civility and self-restraint in private life<br>- willingness to engage in public discourse<br>- ability fo question authority<br>- public reasonableness |
| Civic Republicanism: | - active and virtuous citizenry<br>- political participation valued for its own sake<br>- political life is superior to other private pleasures<br>- high level of prominence in society |

Source: Kymlicka, 1991.

* While there are commonalties among the various theories, each seems to accentuate aspects not considered important by others. Nevertheless alls eem to agree that today's citizens are passive citizens and research suggests that today's generation is more so than the past. Moreover, one can see that there is substantial disagreement as to how full membership and participation can be affected.

**Figure 2. General Model of Civic Involvement**

## Figure 3. Hypothesized and Empirically Tested Correlates of Civic Involvement and their Direction

| | Civic Involvement | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Participation** | **Awareness** | **Skills / Knowledge** |
| **Individual Attributes** | | | |
| Age | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| Education | + | + | + |
| Sex | + | + | + |
| Language Ability | + | + | - |
| Residence | **0** | | |
| Income | + | + | + |
| Social Class | + | + | + |
| Occupation | + | + | + |
| Occupation Prestige | + | + | + |
| Marital Status | + | | |
| Own / Rent House | + | | |
| Material Benefits | + | + | |
| Presence of Children | + | + | + |
| Ethnicity | - | - | - |
| Locus of Control | + | +- | +- |
| Quality of Life | + | + | + |
| Political Involvement | + | + | + |
| Attitudes | | | |
| Beliefs about Immigrants | + | + | |
| Media Usage | +- | | +- |
| Labour Force Participation | + | **0** | 0 |
| "Presence" of Relatives | +- | | - |
| **Structural Factors** | | | |
| Networks | + | + | |
| Government Policy | | | |
| Discrimination | - | - | - |
| State of the Economy | - | - | - |
| Institutional Completeness | - | - | |
| Economic Capacity | + | + | |
| Social Receptiveness | + | + | |
| Historial Experience | | | + |
| Size of Community | | | |
| -Total | - | - | |
| -Minority | | | |
| Labour Force Participation | + | + | |

**Note:** + means positive relationaship; - means negative relationship; 0 = no relationship; blank means no data available. Bold/larger face refers to empirical results.

## Figure 4. Factors Related to Civic Involvement Comparing Immigrants and Native Born Canadian

| | Difference | Similar | Relationship |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | | x | |
| Sex | x | | |
| Education | | x | |
| Income | | x | |
| Social Class | | x | |
| Occupation | | x | |
| Marital Status | x | | |
| Own Home | | x | |
| Language Ability | no control group | | (+) |
| Willingness to Integrate | no control group | | (+) |
| Presence of Children | x | | - |
| Attitudes | x | x | |
| Beliefs | x | x | |
| Networks | x | | |
| Length of Time | no control group | | (+) |
| Age of Entry | no control group | | (+) |
| Media Usage | | | |
| - Mass | | x | |
| - Minority | x | x | |

## Figure 5. Effects of Civic Involvement: Empirical Results

| Independent Variable<br>Civic Involvement | Dependent Variable<br>Effect of Civic Involvement |
|---|---|
| | • higher individual competencies<br>• higher self confidence<br>• sense of citizen duty<br>• lower feeling of helplessness<br>• provision of services<br>• sense of community<br>• community development<br>• higher social cohesion<br>• higher efficacy<br>• residential satisfaction<br>• perception of social issues<br>• higher sense of security<br>• higher rates of friendliness<br>• personal satisfaction<br>• high level of community norms<br>• less confusion over rights and responsibilities<br>• low levels of alienation<br>• higher levels of integration<br>• high level of community development<br>• voting behaviour increases<br>• social integration increases<br>• change physical environment<br>• reduce crime level<br>• increase level of neighbouring<br>• decreased deterioration of physical environment<br>• increased social services at community level |

# Reaction to a paper by J. Frideres, in contribution to the discussion of proposed future strategic research on the civic participation of immigrants and new citizens

by

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**Second National Metropolis Conference**

**Immigrants and Civic Participation: Contemporary Policy and Research Issues**

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The paper by J.R. Frideres is reviewed here in conjunction with the objective of the November 23 workshop, namely, to evaluate existing research in order to set out an agenda for future research and identify the data required about civic participation. The paper by Frideres should be especially relevant to the topic of the third workshop: knowledge, skill and interests in relation to civic participation.

Frideres places a central emphasis on "civic involvement" and the factors conducive to it; he then reflects on the nature of the variables "participation, awareness, knowledge, skills" which, in his general model (p. 16) are intermediate variables between, on the one hand, the variables positively related to civic involvement and, on the other, civic involvement itself.

The term "civic involvement" does not specifically and exclusively refer to the modes of participation in the process of political debate in Canadian democratic institutions. The author uses this phrase to include participation in civilian society, which becomes clear when he lists the various sites of civic involvement. He includes community organizations under voluntary participation, for instance, as one of the most common such sites. The author is therefore interested in all types of participation in public activities in which people act interdependently in a shared space or in which shared resources or opportunities are utilized.

Throughout his paper, Frideres focuses on structural and individual correlates which are positively related to "civic involvement". He uses this approach to explain how a sense of community is developed in the Canadian social and political system.

His study looks into non-structural correlates in particular, or correlates deriving from individual or group characteristics, which are not stable characteristics, but can be changed, by education, experience, social advancement or other influences.

Since the literature he reviews comes from the fields of sociology, political science and social work, his list of non-structural correlates emphasizes primarily, but not exclusively, the variables which define individual socio-demographic status, with less emphasis on variables related to individual development and individual abilities. This is an interesting approach in that it seeks to identify, by objectively measurable indicators, the correlates of civic involvement, and by inference those of participation, awareness, and of the knowledge and skills related to this involvement. We must therefore closely examine this list of proposed variables (p. 17).

This list begins with correlates which are not socio-demographic: education, language competence, the sense of personal effectiveness, which is related to the "locus of control", and attitudes, all of which are positively related to civic involvement, as shown in the general model (p. 16). This means therefore that higher levels of education, mastery of the primary language of communication, confidence in one's ability to change or influence one's environment and certain, unspecified attitudes make individuals more favourably disposed to civic involvement.

The remaining individual variables related to "civic involvement" pertain to the individual's social, demographic, and economic status. This list is longer than the previous one and includes variables which cannot be changed by the individual at will: age, sex and ethnicity. The majority of variables on this list are dynamic, however, since they can be changed by the individual at will under the right circumstances. These are residence, income, social class, occupation, occupational status, owning real estate, number of children, beliefs about immigrants, media consumption, etc.

The general model proposes that all these variables are related to a certain level of social and political awareness, of participation, knowledge and skills, which would explain why these variables are positively related to civic involvement. The social status associated with higher-level occupations, a higher income, belonging to a higher social class, owning a home in a good neighborhood, etc., may give an individual more confidence in his ability to influence things around him, perhaps creating an " incentive" for greater civic involvement. These characteristics also have an impact on acquiring a better knowledge of institutions, greater awareness of the role of individual initiative in changing things and developing skills which are useful in civic involvement and may lead to involvement.

This list of variables should definitely be expanded to include national origin which, according to the significant research by Renaud, Piché et Gingras (1995), is strongly related to the economic integration of immigrants, which can be measured by a number of indicators, which are the same as those cited by Frideres as correlates of civic involvement.

The research reviewed by Frideres therefore indicated that many specific characteristics, which are primarily socio-demographic, are positively related to civic involvement. The general model presumes that we can infer the skills of individuals who exhibit these characteristics to a higher degree. These skills are variables which may lead to greater civic involvement.

The reported research data certainly supports this claim. The socio-demographic characteristics cited as being positively correlated with civic involvement are not given, they are acquired. A certain set of personal skills is required in order to reach a higher level with regard to these characteristics and this is why personal characteristics, as well as circumstances enabling individuals to reach a higher level of these characteristics, are the variables which are truly related to civic involvement. Following this logic, the qualities, skills, etc. which promote integration by virtue of an individual's growing social and economic mobility are also favourable to civic involvement. In other words, the socio-demographic characteristics which are positively related to civic involvement are indicators of certain personal skills related to participation, awareness, knowledge and skills, which lead to greater civic involvement and make it accessible.

These skills can only be inferred from this type of data, however; they are not specifically identified. What are they actually? What kind of awareness, knowledge

and skills underlie these indicators? The research covered by Frideres' summary is not very specific in this regard. These points should however be clarified in order to achieve the objective stated at the outset, which is to prepare a plan for future research on the knowledge, skills and awareness related to civic participation. In the context of the Metropolis research approach, future research should provide more information about the skills required for civic involvement and should help determine if immigrants and new citizens who immigrated possess these skills at a sufficient level to enable them to participate actively in civic life.

In this respect, the characteristics identified by Frideres as being positively correlated with civic involvement in the research are significant findings. One must conclude above all that civic involvement is only possible for individuals who have the characteristics on this list to a certain degree: a certain level of education, mastery of the language used for public communication, of course, and a certain level of income, social status, etc. Since these are positive correlates, one must also conclude that the more of these characteristics an individual has, the greater his social involvement.

We will now propose certain considerations which lead us to some of the questions raised by the approach used, and which could provide useful hints in developing a research agenda.

1. First of all, we assume that this type of research only indicates positive correlation up to a certain point. The indications of correlation are rarely very high and the correlates only explain part of the variance. As a result, any interpretation must allow for numerous exceptions. One of these significant exceptions is the case of very high levels of civic and civilian participation for individuals who do not have a high level of the characteristics cited and are substantially involved in popular movements, associations of individuals struggling to retain their vested interests in the areas of social assistance, health care, etc. In Canadian democracy, there are a great many examples of this type of involvement, and these individuals tend to become more highly involved under circumstances such as those created by the current management of public finances.

2. Another aspect to consider is the precise significance of the correlation between socio-demographic data and civic involvement. In reviewing the vast literature on the characteristics, skills or virtues required of individuals in a pluralist liberal democracy, the approach used by Frideres raises questions which demand an answer. This literature is usually normative in the sense that the authors propose their vision of the ideal citizen in this society. This approach is helpful for us here, not from a normative point of view, but rather because of the questions it raises about "civic involvement" and the skills required.

A central observation in the literature is that civic involvement is subject to major variations. The authors note that there is no consensus on the need for all members of

society to be actively involved. The continuum ranges from minimal to maximum involvement.

> (...) there will always be a portion of the population who have little or no desire to be politically active (...). A liberal democracy must respect such diverse conceptions of the good life, and should not compel people to adopt a conception of the good life which privileges political participation as the source of meaning or satisfaction. Some commentators would argue that most people in contemporary democracies will fall into this apolitical camp - that meaningful political participation is almost inevitably confined to elites (...) On the minimal view, citizenship for most people primarily involves passive respect for laws, not the active exercise of political rights. By contrast, maximal conceptions of democracy insist that a true democracy, or that political justice, must aim for more widespread participation (Kymlicka, 1995).

It is thus clear that the civic involvement correlated with the variables cited by Frideres can fluctuate considerably in degree; we must therefore infer that a significant part of the population who rank favourably on these socio-demographic correlates is not inclined to become involved or is satisfied with minimal civic involvement. An individual may be in an enviable position with regard to several of these characteristics and still not be inclined to become involved over and above the required minimum such as voting, being informed of the issues in election campaigns, etc. Some individuals, by contrast, have a constant and intense level of civic and civilian involvement. It all depends on their type of participation, which is not always strictly determined by these characteristics. In any event, the relationship between the form of participation and these variables is not clear.

If this is true, one must infer that different skills are required for different levels of civic involvement. The skills required to be a law-abiding citizen, not involved in the political process, are different from those required to be active in civilian/civic life. Kymlicka, for instance, argues that "public reasonableness", which is a very important skill for liberal thinkers (Spinner, 1994), is really only required for those who participate actively in politics.

Not only can the degree of political involvement range from the minimum to the maximum, following McAughlin's analysis, but the very concepts of active participation can also vary. Frideres reports six different concepts identified by Kymlicka in his 1992 study. Kautz (1995) makes a thorough analysis of this range of concepts, arriving at the following classification: (neo)-liberal, democratic and republican. Awareness and knowledge are certainly two skills which can be defined differently depending on which of these two common concepts apply to the individuals. Thus, the (neo)-liberal's awareness of the social and economic environment makes him see the world as a vast market of free competition in which he will seek to gain the maximum benefits for himself, while the democrat who is concerned with equality and justice is aware of

instances of inequality and injustice surrounding him. The republican focuses first and foremost on collective wishes as he understands them, and is less concerned with individual wishes; the liberal, on the other hand, is much more concerned with individual wishes and is not pleased to see them overtaken by the will of the majority. These ideological contrasts certainly accentuate the characteristics, but the analyses also reflect different ways of thinking, which definitely give a different perspective on civic involvement.

The skills Frideres cites in his model include participation, and the controversies about civic participation which are reflected in the considerations of citizenship theorists are the source of very significant debate. A significant range was noted in people's views of participation, the objectives they pursue through it and the effect of participation on their relationships with other members of society (Kymlicka, 1995). In this sense, Frideres' study provides an accurate definition of civic involvement by referring to a great variety of "settings", while also recognizing that the motivations for civic involvement can vary widely.

Another variable aspect of civic involvement is the degree of involvement itself. The range from minimum to maximum involvement is not especially helpful in this regard and it conceals certain distinctions which should be recognized. The research of Theiss-Morse (1993), which notes that research on this aspect in the United States is extremely rare, presents four typical cases illustrating how informative a study of the reality of this aspect of citizenship can be. The author cites four separate approaches which have been identified empirically: citizens whose sole involvement in the electoral process is to be as well informed as possible in order to vote effectively; citizens who, in addition to voting, are actively involved in elections, party conventions, writing to their MP or government; citizens who participate in the electoral process but whose greatest effort is devoted to movements and associations which do not aim for a direct political impact, but rather to improve their surroundings or achieve their own personal goals; finally; citizens who vote believing that their vote will not have much impact and who avoid all other political or community involvement, attending to their own affairs instead.

From the outset, Frideres asserts that he does not intend to discuss the controversy raised by the "discourse of civil society", nor the debate between the defenders of elitist and participatory models of democracy, or between those who defend rights, the welfare state, communitarism or neo-liberal thinking. But to what extent can we gloss over these issues when examining the skills required for civic involvement?

Many consider this to be a relevant topic of research and we admittedly know little about Canadian preferences for the various types of civic involvement, and the skills required for each. This is relevant both for the variations from minimum to maximum involvement and for the basic view of civic involvement itself. Are immigrants and new citizens who immigrated any different on these two scales? One question, for instance, is whether immigrants and new citizens seek community involvement including people of the same origin or whether they seek involvement in political

movements and parties transcending their particular origins? Do they believe that political representation should be by ethnically homogeneous pressure groups or do their prefer broader representation, bringing together people from varied origins around a common cause? A research agenda which is to shed light on civic involvement cannot completely overlook all of this variation. This is the primary focus of the current work on concepts of citizenship among young adults being carried out by the GREAPE research group, of the Ethnic Studies Centre of the Université de Montréal.

3. If we are to gloss over all these controversies, we must admit that civic participation, regardless of the type, is essential in democracy: defending the primary interests of the nation, defending class interests, fighting against inequality, defending individual freedom, etc. It is not surprising that different skills go along with the various orientations, on the contrary. This is even normal and desirable in a pluralist democracy. Moreover, whether individuals opt for minimum or maximum civic involvement is a matter of free choice, and maximum involvement of all citizens would not only represent a state of utopia, but would cause a glut which many do not consider as desirable. Variations in the characteristics associated with these options are also normal and desirable.

By inviting us to step away from the question of variations in the degree of civic involvement, Frideres raises an interesting alternative question: is there a common set of core skills which would be more useful and which, in addition to civic involvement, would be an enabling condition rather than a determining factor with regard to these orientations? It is clearly this type of skills which we are more naturally inclined to infer from Frideres' model which, over and above socio-demographic correlates, provides a beginning of the list of correlates belonging to this core set of skills: education, mastery of the language of public communication, etc.

This brings us closer to the concerns of promoters of citizenship education who, for many years, have proposed a common set of core skills to be provided by citizenship education. In order to define the set of intermediate variables favourable to civic education, we must inevitably turn to the field of citizenship education, which sets specific objectives related to the intermediate values we wish to define. These objectives for citizenship education are not set in terms of the level to be achieved on socio-demographic indicators. Education does indeed seek to promote socio-economic integration or, in other words, to achieve an optimum level on the greatest number of socio-demographic indicators. But the objectives in educating young citizens are not defined in these terms only. The objectives pertain instead to the individual skills to be acquired by the greatest number of pupils possible. We are well aware that certain pupils will later on be in a socio-economic position which makes them more inclined to civic involvement than other pupils, but citizenship education is not intended solely to prepare a small number of individuals for civic involvement. Citizenship education is not intended exclusively for the future elite. The basic assumption is that it is necessary for everyone. It promotes objectives which would improve the citizenship skills of all individuals. These objectives are numerous and varied, as we have noted in our

studies on the reality of citizenship education, in Quebec and Ontario in particular (McAndrew, Bourgeault and Pagé: Canadian Ethnic Studies Program grant, PatCan, 1996).

The field of citizenship education is characterized in part by a host of objectives comprised of various skills to be taught to young people – and we will return to this – and also by poor practical introduction of these ideas, which for a variety of reasons are difficult to incorporate into prescriptive programs and into adequate teaching material which teachers are motivated to use and pupils are interested in learning. This observation is based on a review of programs and achievements of citizenship education in France, the United States and Canada, conducted by members of the GREAPE team at the Ethnic Studies Centre, of the Université de Montréal (McAndrew, Tessier and Bourgeault, 1997). For future reference, what would be the basic set of knowledge and skills revealed by this study? Information in this regard comes from various sources, government programs in some instances, especially in the case of France, instructional material proposed for national use and the standards prescribed for all schools, such as in the United States, etc. In Canada, there is no national program in this regard and the provincial governments, who have jurisdiction over education, are still not very specific in this area. Numerous sources have nevertheless contributed to defining the skills which all Canadian citizens should have acquired upon completion of secondary school.

These skills emphasized by those who design citizenship education programs involve knowledge. A literature review has therefore made it possible to highlight certain agreed areas of knowledge which should be acquired: knowledge which can be described as instrumental, on the one hand, indispensable to exercising civic rights and duties - knowledge of government and social institutions, of laws and the parliamentary (or presidential) system; as well as knowledge required to analyze and understand current social realities. Moreover, there is general agreement that citizenship education should take into consideration the pluralism of modern societies. Citizenship education should not only inform newcomers about the host society's institutions, values and democratic principles, it should also make all students aware of the legitimacy of diversity, obstacles to integration and the existence of racism and discrimination (McAndrew et al., p. 12).

With regard to civic aptitudes and attitudes to be developed, there are various sources and proposed lists. There is no question however that a common set of core skills and attitudes deemed necessary for all citizens should be defined. Without attempting to summarize all the material investigated, these lists of skills frequently include some skills cited by the École québécoise in 1979: "institutional education claims to promote intellectual values such as (...) an appreciation of democracy, which is gained gradually through a knowledge of institutions and people, by learning about one's rights and duties as a citizen; moral values such as (...) respecting oneself and others, a foundation for justice in society, and the tolerance which is increasingly required so that everyone can play an active role in a pluralist society" (Quebec ministry of education, 1979) (McAndrew et al., 1997). The values cited in this list are also found

in all the other sources consulted in the study in question, as well as others which are specific to certain national contexts, such as secularism in France and constitutional values in the United States.

In addition to knowledge, preparation for the widest range of forms of participation (participation in the decision-making process, teaching principles for contracts, community service, etc.) and starting as young as possible, is now viewed as an educational experience with a very strong formative influence (Pagé, 1996).

Pursuing educational objectives involves working on the awareness of young people, teaching a pre-determined body of knowledge, and the practical learning of social skills, a list of which can easily be made using a survey such as the one done by Sears et al. (1996) and McAndrew et al. (1997). In other words, the concerns of educators wishing to set objectives for citizenship education directly confirm the intermediate variables in the model proposed by Frideres.

Two research issues are raised by the contribution of those who design citizenship education. The first issue arises from the observation that, if we can infer from the official discourse on citizenship education some very specific ideas about the knowledge, attitudes and skills potentially forming a common set of core skills, which is neutral with regard to the selection of forms of participation and approaches to civic action, we must note that the properly planned educational practices to develop these skills have not yet been introduced. As a result, we have little solid research data indicating that the objectives of citizenship education are truly attainable or that we know the most effective ways of achieving them. This is all in spite of the fact that we can in all earnest assert that "citizenship education has been viewed historically as one of the principal obligations of public schooling" (Hughes et al, 1996, p. 123).

The research agenda required in this regard should indicate what type of citizenship education is currently being conducted in Canadian schools, both explicitly through curriculum activities and through actual school practices. What are the real objectives and practices, how effective are they in reality and under what conditions are they successfully implemented – these are all priority topics for future research, insofar as liberal democracy theorists always rely on public schooling as one of the institutions responsible for civic education. Research on citizenship education has certainly not been given the priority it warrants in Canada. As the literature reviews conducted by the GREAPE team of the CEETUM and, recently, by Hugues et al. (1996) show, there has been little to answer these questions since the impressive, major research conducted in the 1960s and resumed on a smaller scale in the 1980s by Maseman.

The second research topic pertains to the skills proposed as objectives of citizenship education. What guarantees are there that, if we make every effort to develop these skills among young people, they will have an adequate level of civic involvement in adulthood? This is certainly a valid long-term research question.

The factors influencing young people's interest in civic involvement in their community should definitely be of central importance in such research. If we admit that the knowledge and skills required for civic participation in adulthood are first learned at school through involvement in that community, we should ascertain to what extent the educational setting promotes and appeals for youth participation, how young people respond to the appeals for participation and to what extent this experience influences them. We found in our studies of young people who had completed secondary school that their level of participation in decision-making and activities in the school setting is quite low, both among the children of immigrant parents or new citizens and the children of native-born Canadians (McAndrew, Pagé, Jodoin, 1997). How can we explain these observations? Is it because schools make few appeals for them to participate, or because they are not interested in participating in an institutional setting, preferring other types of participation outside this framework?

We are indisputably witnessing the emergence of new, alternative forms of civic participation, especially new perspectives on the relationship of the individual to the state and to political activity. These alternative forms develop initially in excluded and marginalized settings. The French research is especially enlightening in this regard, because groups of marginalized young people are a larger phenomenon than in Canada, and yet it is still possible for certain groups of immigrants and new citizens of specific national origins, although somewhat marginalized, to be drawn to types of participation which are non-institutional. Future research should therefore consider the absence of civic involvement, whether in a school setting or in public life. Such research could uncover a number of possibilities. Non-involvement could be a deliberate choice made by individuals wishing to focus on interest groups or pursue their own interests outside the system, or it could be the inevitable result of being socially excluded; it could also be due to disaffection with the system, combined with a loss of confidence in politicians, etc. It would not take very much for new types of civic and civilian relationships to develop, not only among marginalized and excluded individuals. It is clear that young people, like most adults, are experiencing a crisis in confidence in civic institutions and in those in political office. Do young citizens and adults who have lost some or all of their confidence in these civic institutions avoid all involvement or do they turn instead to new forms of involvement, where social solidarity can be strong without engaging in civic activity? This is of central importance for a major phenomenon which is still poorly understood.

Finally, consideration should be given to the concerns of educators and sociologists studying civic involvement. As the above remarks emphasize, the relationship between, on the one hand, the intermediate values inferred by Frideres from recent research on civic involvement and the skills, values and "virtues" proposed as the objectives of citizenship education, on the other, is uncertain. There is no indication whatsoever of a one-to-one relationship between the two. Studying the relationship between them is a research topic in itself. A sense of equality, respect for rights, diversity, tolerance and a sense of justice are always of key importance among the objectives of citizenship education. Do these attitudes make an individual inclined to civic involvement? Some people may become involved because they want these

values to be better defended in civilian and civic life. Others may choose to express these values through their relationships at work, in their private or community life, without becoming civic defenders of these values. The values which lead individuals to civic involvement may however be entirely different: defending personal or group privileges and interests, seeking the attendant personal recognition and benefits, etc.

Researchers involved in measuring the objective factors related to civic involvement may perhaps not be interested in defining the individual skills required to live in harmony in accordance with the standards of liberal democracy. For now, looking at the correlates of civic involvement provides significant information, but it is incomplete. It focuses on the characteristics which tend to engender civic involvement. Without these characteristics, civic involvement may perhaps be impossible. We must conclude that future research on the skills required for civic involvement should not focus exclusively on the "virtues" required to live in accordance with the standards of liberal democracy, but also on the specific enabling conditions under which these "virtues" are activated through civic involvement and which are indicated by correlates identified by Frideres.

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## Workshop 2

## Civic Awareness, Knowledge and Skills

Moderator: Michel Pagé, University of Montréal

Summary: Marianne Jacquet, University of Montréal

### Presentation by Working Group

Although the workshop participants came from various backgrounds, they all shared common concerns about civic awareness, knowledge and skills in a multicultural society. Their discussion focused on various issues raised in the "status report" given by James Frideres in his article, "Civic Participation, Awareness, Knowledge and Skills," which the participants had read. This paper presents a survey of recent literature on factors associated with civic participation in Canada and other societies. It also addresses the many facets of civic involvement, particularly civic participation, awareness, knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of a citizen, and the ability to exercise those rights and responsibilities. This working group was formed to identify directions for future research on civic participation and to determine the skills needed for such participation. The workshop, which was conducted in an informal manner, gave rise to some fruitful discussions.

### Discussion Points

Among other things, the participants discussed the methodological and conceptual characteristics (validity and reliability of the questions, definition of categories, selection of respondents) of research on civic participation. They noted the multi-faceted nature of the categories and concepts used for research in this area, and suggested these be broken into smaller components for fuller understanding of this phenomenon. Several questions were raised: What is meant by civic participation? What is the meaning of non-participation? Is there a distinction between civic participation and the pursuit of personal interests? As a corollary, what does the search for the common good consist of? How can a person participate in a society without civic participation? Is it a national, provincial or regional phenomenon? Why? How can it be managed?

There was consensus within the working group regarding the need to conduct qualitative and interpretative research on civic participation. Very little research has been done on the different concepts of citizenship among the various target populations (immigrant versus non-immigrant) (Marie Mc Andrew, Michel Pagé). Moreover, the group members agreed that the emphasis should be on local as opposed to national research and that the complex and changing nature of the various situations should be

taken into account. They also agreed that attention should be paid to both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of civic participation.

The participants made a distinction between formal and informal systems, different levels of participation (individual and collective) and the relationships among them, thereby revealing the many dimensions of civic participation. They suggested dissociating the various forms of civic participation so as to ensure development of the appropriate skills.

As well as the positive contribution made to a society by civic participation, considerable attention was paid to the negative consequences it may have, including the collective and individual social costs. In this spirit, the following question was raised: Who pays the price?

In terms of relations between different groups, civic participation can lead to polarization of attitudes and debates (the nationalist question in Québec or the abortion issue, for example). However, Raymond Breton and Alan Sears felt that polarization is a normal and even desirable process, since it contributes to change and allows a society to reach a consensus. The participants agreed, however, that it is a question of knowing how to manage this polarization and, in particular, identifying the circumstances in which it results in endemic conflict that cannot be resolved.

The personal costs of civic participation may also be high. Basing his remarks on the example of housing in Vancouver, Timothy Welsh said that in some areas, civic participation is not always appreciated. Notwithstanding the negative consequences, defending democratic principles (particularly with respect to government actions) implies protest, which the participants considered a form of civic participation.

Another example involving civic participation by students illustrated an important dimension of civic participation: the question of power, and particularly its relationship to conflict management structures and the negative consequences. In short, the participants agreed that civic participation may be positive, negative or neutral.

With regard to factors that may facilitate or inhibit civic participation, the participants discussed the social space given to civic participation in institutions with a view to resolving polarization (Jeff Bullard). The discussion addressed the impact of laws and policies and the influence that the positive or negative reception given to certain groups in society may have on civic participation. In addition, the role of ethnic associations, the language abilities of certain groups, awareness of political and environmental issues and, in general, civic awareness, knowledge and skills were all mentioned as factors that might encourage or limit civic participation.

The working group considered it important to define the parameters of civic participation. To what extent does it depend on personal circumstances? What is the basis for participation? Yvonne Hébert commented that research in this regard should also bear in mind that voting patterns, class, gender, and identification of relevant issues are socially constructed as well.

The participants discussed the need to identify conflict management structures and techniques in order to determine which ones promote civic participation and which do not. Suzanne Peters said that certain conflict management models lead to greater polarization. More specifically, the group suggested studying the impact and effectiveness of pedagogical programs, activities, projects and curriculums with respect to the development of civic skills, as well as the effect of different school management models on voting and other forms of participation by parents and the public. In this regard, Alan Sears said that the elimination of school boards in New Brunswick is not conducive to civic participation. Tracey Derwing also mentioned the lack of formal information on "what it means to be Canadian." Apparently, there are fewer courses on this subject than there were ten years ago. Furthermore, the participants placed considerable emphasis on the impact that the various types of media have on civic participation, with respect to both the individual and society (in the form of polarized attitudes).

Finally, the participants mentioned the existence of new coalitions and alliances between groups, as conflicting interests are resolved through the search for shared interests. The consequences of this type of conflict resolution deserve to be examined with a view to developing new initiatives. Issues related to systemic representation in policy development and implementation were discussed, as were representation of the experience of others and the social position of the researcher. More general questions pertaining to individual and collective rights, determining the principles of civic participation, and the responsibility to define them were also raised.

**Recommendations**

Following the discussion, the participants reached a consensus on a number of key proposals to guide future research on civic participation. The issue of definitions (What is civic participation? What is the meaning of non-participation, of knowledge and of skills?); research methodology (concepts, perspectives and attitudes); and identification of the structures created to promote civic participation in various social forums (both institutional and in the community) were all considered important. Similarly, the role played by the media and other information sources in civic participation, as well as the link between language abilities and the community system as an inhibitor or facilitator of civic participation, were of interest.

The participants agreed that qualitative and interpretative research should be conducted to explore civic awareness, knowledge and skills, the impact and consequences of different educational approaches and curriculums, beliefs about citizenship education and the debate over this issue, as well as the power relationships underlying curriculum development and control over education. As a corollary, the question of power as it relates to representation of others and determination of rights and principles was of interest to the participants.

The working group suggested identifying the stumbling blocks and parameters for participation and their basis. Defining non-participation, civic participation as the

pursuit of personal interests and its relationship to the search for the common good were considered essential to any examination of civic participation.

Another key proposal made by the participants concerned polarization, conflict resolution and the restructuring of new alliances on the basis of shared interests. Finally, the participants felt that the personal and collective costs associated with civic participation, as well as their relationship to social stratification and access to resources, should be put into perspective.

# Voluntary and Social Participation by People of Immigrant Origin: Overview of Canadian Research

by

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The purpose of this seminar, organized by the Multiculturalism Directorate of the Department of Canadian Heritage, is to examine the forms and extent of immigrant participation in civil society. Included is a review of Canadian research on volunteer activities and donations of money and time to organizations and on the types of, and reasons for, participation in "voluntary" recreational associations. Few qualitative or quantitative studies focus on these two issues, but some of them help us to give this new field of research clearer definition. They bring out the motives, perceptions, and other factors involved in making an active contribution to the cohesion of civil society through, for example, membership in ethnic community associations or in more broadly based associations with different roles.

The aim of this document is to present the findings of studies that describe and analyse the behaviours, characteristics, motives, attitudes and perceptions of the members of such associations. It is not meant to be exhaustive; rather, it presents an overview of current research trends in the field of social participation in general in order to shed light on immigrants' volunteer work and their involvement in recreational associations.

Work on these two aspects is part of research on social participation. It would therefore be useful to outline the current directions of research and the theoretical questions being raised.

## I. DIRECTIONS AND QUESTIONS

### I.1 Definition of Social Participation

Social participation is now defined as an individual's participation in groups outside the family, the political arena and the workplace (political parties, unions, pressure groups). Specifically, it excludes membership in groups based on origin or ethnic group, family relations, a society's political system, gender or sexual orientation, age, trade or profession, business, social class and so on. According to researchers, organizations of these types are related to the dynamics of identity, which may be an aspect but certainly is not the basis of social participation. A sense of identity does not necessarily entail membership in or specific action within a given, observable group.

It follows that social participation covers all types of voluntary, active affiliation with groups outside the family and all types of group activity unrelated to political organizations, voting and lobbying.[24] The types of affiliation may be observed and analysed from a number of different perspectives.

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[24] Professional associations may be excluded from the voluntary association category on this basis.

## I.2. Forms of Social Participation

Social participation, including voluntarism, may be institutional (organizations, associations and clubs) or informal (individual activities). The two forms may find expression in the actions of the same individual, and each operates in different ways.

### I.2.1. Informal Participation

Informal participation operates in two specific ways:

- *ad hoc* involvement in group action at irregular intervals, such as charitable donations to disadvantaged groups and individuals;
- stable, regular participation in activities of groups that are not institutions as such but are relatively permanent (youth and music groups, for example).

### I.2.2. Formal Participation

Formal participation covers any affiliation with registered associations, clubs and groups with an ongoing program of activities, a meeting place, and officers.

Research outside Canada, particularly in France, indicates that today young immigrants, like other young people, tend not to choose *institutional*, "traditional" forms of social participation. The declining respect for politically active organizations since the eighties[25] and the increasing number of forms of identity (cultural difference, ethnic group, sexual orientation, race, gender), lead to their choosing less organized forms (Camilleri and Tapia, 1983: 176, 184; Reszhoazy, 1983: 97; de Wenden 1992[26]). Young people tend to join unstable, informal, temporary groups.[27] For instance, they react against a specific social condition that they have been allotted and regard as a stigma (unemployment, underprivileged social background, phenotype), get involved in local social life, or take up pastimes in an informal context: neighbourhood or school gangs intent on controlling their "turf" and in most cases affirming their identity (Bachman, 1992; Dubé, Lagrée and Lew-Fai, 1985[28]), and music groups.

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[25] In 1983, 9% of young Canadians considered political involvement to be important (GoldfarbYouth Study, 1983).

[26] Carmel Camilleri and Claude Tapia (1983), *Les "nouveaux jeunes." La politique ou le bonheur. Jeunesse de France, d'Europe et du Tiers-Monde*, Toulouse, Privat. "Epoque." Rudolf Reszhoazy (1983), *Les jeunes. Un profil social, politique et religieux*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Catholic University of Louvain, social diagnosis service. Catherine W. de Wenden (1992), "Les associations 'beur' et immigrées," *Regards sur l'actualité* 178 (February 1992): 31-44.

[27] Street demonstrations rather than membership in parties or other political organizations, for example.

[28] C. Bachman (1992), "Jeunes et banlieues," in G. Ferréol (dir.), *Intégration et exclusion dans la société française contemporaine*, Lille, Presses universitaires. Charles J. Lagrée and Paula Lew-Fai (1985), *La galère. Marginalisations juvéniles et collectivités locales*, Paris, Presses du CNRS.

This dichotomy between formal and informal types raises the problem of a theoretical definition of types of integration into social life, through organizations or other forms of social activity, not to mention the issue of whether to include in the definition adversarial forms of social participation—considered unacceptable by some—such as gangs of youths who flout cultural and other standards.

### I.3. Aim or Focus of Social Participation

In 1973, in one of the first pieces of work to try to give a precise definition of social participation, J. N. Edwards and A. Both[29] suggested that social participation has two aims. The first one is instrumental:

> . . . the activities are directed outside the group of participants. Their objectives are instrumental in the sense that the activities pursued have functional consequences for some segment of the community or larger society. These activities are a means to a goal and the participants derive gratification from the accomplishment of the goal. Such is the case of social protests...
> (Edwards and Both, pp. 2-3)

The second is expressive:

> At the other extreme, a large amount of social participation is self-contained, an end in itself. The consequences of engaging in expressive activities are restricted solely to the participants themselves; attainment of the objectives has no effect on the non-participants. In pursuing expression participation, gratification of the participants is immediate rather than deferred as in the case of instrumental participation. Card-playing is an outstanding example of expressive activity." (Idem)

According to Edwards and Both, the main difference between the two types lies in the underlying motives, in whether the aims are those of a group or an individual. Instrumental social participation entails a plan to maintain or change the social order through group action. Professional associations and those defending rights (antiracist, feminist, immigrant and other groups) fall into this category in its institutional form. In its unorganized form, it could today entail the fight for status or social recognition for a group that has been excluded because of its social condition or its rejection of standards (skinheads,[30] homosexuals, neighbourhood gangs). It could also entail contestation of specific measures, usually ones taken by the government, through

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[29] John N. Edwards and Alan Both (1973), *Social Participation in Urban Society*, Cambridge, Mass., Schenkman Publishing Co.

[30] This group contests and rejects standards ranging from antiracism to the dress code.

demonstrations in the streets and efforts to improve a social situation (volunteer work, individual charitable donations). Expressive social participation is based only on personal interests and affects and a desire for individual gratification.[31]

This distinction is a matter of considerable debate. Many authors feel that social participation cannot be explained solely on the basis of individual motives. It must be analysed from a sociological perspective, and its function as a force of social cohesion or fragmentation examined, since every group creates forms of social inclusion and solidarity or is a response to exclusion.

### I.4. Level of Social Participation

Another subject of study, particularly with regard to people with an immigrant background, is the level at which institutional and informal groups operate — the neighbourhood, city, country of residence, country of origin, one or more foreign countries (the diaspora, the "African" transnational community, of young Caribbean immigrants to Québec).

### I.5. Membership Criteria

Informal organizations and groups establish broad-based or narrowly focused recruitment criteria in the form of negative markers and positive attributes. Here are some examples:

- socioeconomic condition (profession, income)
- religion
- personal interests (recreation or sports club)
- culture (ethnic association)
- age group
- phenotype
- gender or sexual orientation
- place of residence.

The ethnocultural criterion for recruitment of immigrants breaks down into the following subcategories:

- same cultural reference group (ethnic community type)
- same cultural reference group or religion, including Haitian church choirs, Buddhist pagodas, and Vietnamese Catholic groups (ethno-religious type)
- same cultural region of origin, including Caribbean, Arab and Muslim groups (pan-ethnic type)

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[31] It could entail social mobility, establishment of useful relationships, emotional gratification by means of pastimes in a group setting (music, sports, etc.), or an affirmation of one's identity or religious beliefs.

- immigrant status (pan-immigrant type)
- phenotype (race-based type)
- legal status (refugee type).

### I.6 Bases of Social Participation

An individual's social participation may be analysed on the basis of a number of sociological factors relating either to individual characteristics or to social dynamics.

Factors relating to individual characteristics, brought out mainly in American studies, include the following:

- socio-economic status within society as a whole, which causes people to consider the usefulness of any social activity or, more commonly, of any individual strategy of integration and promotion (view of parents' experience, expectations about employment, education, and the future, determination of social handicaps and whether they can be overcome, real or perceived discrimination);
- level of education;
- occupation and income, which partly determine financial resources and leisure time;
- age group;
- gender and sexual orientation;
- background, including family socialization and traditions of membership and participation learned from parents;
- phenotype;[32]
- place of residence;
- social and group life changes within the neighbourhood and the social categories living there;
- private social networks.[33]

The relative importance of certain representations and perceptions is also evident with respect to participation with a group aim. For example:

- perception and experience of ethnic discrimination or racism;
- forms of social and national identification;
- view of the respective roles of public institutions and citizens in removing social tension and inequality.

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[32] The purpose of a number of American studies in the seventies and eighties was to compare social participation of Blacks with that of individuals from other phenotypes.

[33] Sources of information on existing associations and groups.

Regarding social dynamics, the following factors may be assumed to affect immigrants and are particularly relevant for comparative studies of countries and ethnic groups:

- symbolic public recognition of immigrants and of the cultural diversity they contribute to a society;
- the extent to which reference groups have a community structure, since this determines opportunities for affiliation and activities such as mutual assistance and volunteer work;
- policies on local community activities, particularly for young people, which may provide further opportunities for association and activity;
- support policies and programs for ethnic institutions' activities and to combat discrimination.

The choice of bases for study depends entirely on the theoretical standpoint taken by the researcher. The debate is ongoing.

### I.7. Interpretation of Social Participation

There are currently three schools of thought in the public and academic debate on forms of immigrant integration. The first school claims that the minimum prerequisites for integration into a democratic society are, on the one hand, the exercise of rights granted to any resident and the recognition of vested rights (freedom to work, recognition of experience and education, social rights, basic rights, non-discrimination, access to citizenship[34]) and, on the other hand, the assimilation of practices and codes of social behaviour enabling the individual to exercise those rights. Thus knowledge of the official language would seem to be of prime importance, as would at least a basic knowledge of the workings of public institutions. For this school, meeting lifestyle requirements and employment conditions and the development of a sense of belonging seem to be of secondary importance.

The second school believes that immigrant integration based solely on exercise of rights and designed merely to serve the individual's interests is not enough and that forms of participation in civil society are necessary. The school identifies two types of participation: (I) affiliation with institutions and networks, which are private, whatever their makeup and role; (ii) inclusion in a "majority" group within civil society. Advocates of this approach propose a normative view of integration and participation based on a comparison of immigrant and native behaviours. In short, they aim to define the prototype of the immigrant who can be integrated within the majority group.

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[34] Some authors consider that access to citizenship is not even a prerequisite, since an individual should be integrated only on the principle of individual rights, not on the principle of territorial, citizenship rights (Soysal, 1994). In their view, residence is the only basic principle.

The third school states that participation in the social life of the "majority" group is not enough; immigrants must share with that group the reference points that give it its identity: its history, the "majority culture," and even its political aims.

## II. STUDIES OF ETHNICALLY BASED SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

There has been a relatively large number of studies on ethnic associations and the structural and historic factors in community-building and ethnic cohesion in Canada. There are also many directories that list and briefly describe ethnic institutions by region or city in Canada. There is very little research, however, that deals specifically with mutual aid and leisure activities among immigrants, their motivations for engaging in such activities and their various characteristics. As a result, there is no systematic information for the current period on individuals who volunteer in ethnic associations, the extent of volunteer work in these organizations or the financial contribution of members to these organizations' operating budgets. Nor is such information available for leisure associations, with the exception of ethnic athletic clubs. McKay made this observation as early as 1980, noting that Breton's notion of institutional completeness (1964)[35] does not specify whether the ethnic organizations Breton studied were really voluntary organizations, i.e., entailing membership. The only general information available is that provided by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the volume on ethnic associations (Wakefield and Sherwood, 1967). Wakefield and Sherwood provide some statistical data on membership in Ukrainian, German, Italian and Dutch groups (Chapter III), describe the associations' activities, and conclude that membership in ethnic associations correlates with a strong desire to preserve ethnic identity.

There is, however, some research dealing with a related subject that is useful to the study of volunteer work in ethnic associations: the role of these organizations as perceived by members and non-members.

### II.1. Athletic Clubs

In a volume on ethnic athletic clubs in Canada (Harney, 1985), contributors discuss the reasons for the proliferation of leisure associations, particularly athletic clubs during the post-war period. The 28 essays in this work provide historical background on ethnic sporting associations in Ontario and discuss the roles of certain individuals and the reasons the clubs were formed, according to their founders. In North America, these associations generally grew out of ethnic mutual aid associations founded before the Second World War. In the post-war period, the role of these organizations was questioned and a debate took place on what their primary function should be: to provide social and medical assistance or to offer leisure services, particularly by creating recreational sections for young members. In general, immigrants who arrived in the 1950's or later were more favourable to a recreational

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35 "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 70: 193-205.

function for these associations than were earlier generations of immigrants. They could obtain assistance from the social programs of the welfare state, and at the same time the concept of leisure was making headway in Canadian society.

To the central question in the study of ethnic voluntary associations — whether or not they are factors for the segregation of immigrants and their descendants — Bretell (1977) responds that membership in ethnic athletic clubs strengthens ethnic identity. McKay (1975, 1980) examines participation in soccer clubs founded by Italian immigrants in Toronto. These clubs recruit members from ethnic groups other than Italian and are not a symbol of ethnicity for members. McKay concludes that membership in this type of voluntary ethnic association in no way reinforces ethnic distinctions. McKay also provides figures to demonstrate that participation in these athletic clubs outstrips participation in all other forms of voluntary activities (mutual aid, leisure, political and church associations or school committees). Finally, he points out that the "integrating" role of multi-ethnic associations has not been studied.

Other studies deal with particular ethnic athletic clubs (Smith and Grindstaff, 1970; Day, 1981; Cheska, 1981; Mott, 1981; Tester, 1986; Walter, Brown and Grabb, 1991). Some, while providing historical background, discuss the role and motivations of members; most important, in view of the purpose of this seminar, they illustrate the social cohesion promoted by this type of leisure association. For example, Walter, Brown and Grabb (1991) examine the influence of membership in athletic clubs on two aspects of community life among Toronto-area Caribbean and Italian immigrants: the preservation or strengthening of ethnic identity, and the groups' internal cohesion. Their findings show that participation in sports has a strong influence on these two aspects of community life, especially among the West Indians. Cheska (1981) made the same observations about Scottish immigrants who participate in sporting festivals brought over from Scotland. These conclusions lead us to ask whether voluntary or leisure activities other than sports could have similar effects. They also raise the theoretical and political question of whether the internal cohesion of ethnic organizations is a factor in the social cohesion of society as a whole.

### II.2. Foundations of Ethnic Solidarity

The foundations of ethnic solidarity seem to be central to studies of ethnically based voluntary and leisure activities. We will cite several research studies based on interviews dealing with the perception of ethnic solidarity.

A survey conducted by Breton, Isajiw, Kalbach and Reitz (1990) in Toronto addresses this question in the case of seven ethnocultural groups. The proportion of respondents who feel a duty to support the needs and causes of their reference group varies from 93 per cent for those of Jewish origin to 50 per cent for those of German

origin[36]. There is little variation by age group, level of education or occupation; the breakdown does vary, however, according to generation and religion. The sense of obligation towards the reference group is stronger among immigrants than among their descendants and is less pronounced among Protestants than among Jews and Catholics. This attitude can be assumed to be a factor in the desire to participate in mutual aid and volunteer activities.

Based on a survey of immigrant women from India, Moghaddam and Taylor (1987) conclude that strong defence of one's culture of origin could be related to the experiences of isolation and discrimination. In a second study, Moghaddam, Taylor and Lalonde (1987) look at how Iranian immigrants perceive their ethnic associations. This group sees such institutions as a way to obtain a more egalitarian social status for their community or as a way to achieve personal gain. They are more inclined to try to preserve the values of their homeland if they believe they cannot obtain the same advantages on their own. Cultural preservation and ethnic community building are not mechanically related. Cultural differences appear rather to be an ideological factor supporting institutional action and galvanization. Lalonde and Cameron (1993) confirm the relationship between a negative perception of the reference group's social status and the development of solidarity. Caribbean and Chinese immigrants, who report being strongly discriminated against, favour community action, unlike other immigrants, who consider themselves less stigmatized (Greek or Italian immigrants).

Based on interviews with children of Sephardic Jewish immigrants from Morocco, Elbaz (1993) describes how these young people, born in Québec, maintain their Jewish identity[37], even though they have experienced considerable upward social mobility. They work in the liberal professions, whereas their parents were middlemen in business. But the competition they faced in achieving this social mobility is one of the factors in their sense of ethnic solidarity. The other contributing factors are the socialization they experienced in denominational schools and Montréal's socio-linguistic divisions.

According to another study of approximately one hundred immigrants[38] (Helly,1995), those who are most favourable to social action[39] by ethnic associations report little interest in these associations' function in preserving the values — particularly

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36 Depending on origin: Italian - 76%, Chinese - 70%, Portuguese - 74%, Ukrainian - 80%, Caribbean Anglophone - 82%.

37 Synagogue attendance and religious rituals, dietary laws, endogamy, attachment to Israel, memories of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

38 Who identify themselves as Vietnamese, Haitian, Anglophone Caribbean, Polish, Chinese or Arab.

39 Youth and adult leisure organizations, professional training for young people, assistance for disadvantaged families, family reunification, shelters for battered women, assistance to the elderly.

family values — that they associate with their country of origin[40]. Cultural preservation and attachment to the social function of the associations seem to be unrelated. The attitude of others, who believe that ethnic associations should serve a single function as an instrument of cultural distinction, confirms this observation. These "traditionalists" cannot promote their social position and cultural distinctiveness in Québec, because of conditions of social inequality and humiliation which they consider unjust and insurmountable. They are indifferent or hostile to the idea of any social role for community organizations. Often they fear such a role. The only values that provide them with a satisfying social identity are the private ones they learned in their homeland and which they believe ethnic institutions can no longer propagate. One study (Helly, 1997) shows a similar phenomenon in the case of young immigrants living in Montréal. While family socialization and the parents' legacy of involvement in associations are the primary factors determining participation in ethnic or universalist associations, the experience of discrimination and the perception of symbolic non-recognition by society are other important factors.

These studies seem to illustrate that the experience of discrimination or non-recognition, and the perceived ability to overcome it, underlie attitudes towards the role of ethnic institutions. The perception of one's current and, more important still, potential social status is a primary factor in the development of ethnic solidarity. Once again, it can be supposed that this same sense of solidarity is a factor motivating immigrants to volunteer in activities to help members of their reference group. The question arises whether this sense of solidarity would affect the willingness of such groups to participate in volunteer activities for people of other ethnocultural origins who are experiencing similar social barriers.

In an article outlining the history of Vietnamese associations in Montréal over the last 25 years, Dorais (1992:82) writes that ethnic leaders "[translation] see their role in terms of a compassionate duty towards their compatriots, whom they must help integrate into a new world." It is not known whether this view is as strongly held among the rank and file of these organizations.

Another study (Labelle and Therrien, 1992; Labelle, Therrien and Lévy,1994) describes how leaders of ethnic communities perceive their associations. Some of the groups in this study, such as the Italian and Jewish communities, are strongly institutionalized, while others, such as the Haitian and Lebanese communities, are not. Respondents see ethnic institutions as organizations that assist and socialize newly arrived immigrants (by helping them learn and decode social mores, laws and consumption patterns, for example). In addition, Jewish, Italian and Haitian leaders see their institutions as instruments for preserving their cultural differences, particularly by promoting the teaching of mother tongues. Again, they point to their function as

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[40] In their view, ethnocultural origin is not a criterion for choosing friends, and it is not important to them whether their friends and neighbours share their cultural code. They prefer Québec's values, which they consider more liberal: gender equality within the family, shared parental authority and financial management, the right of the State to intervene in cases of family violence, acceptance of sex education in the schools.

spokespersons and advocates of the interests of a group, government or pressure group, notably in the case of umbrella organizations such as the National Congress of Italian Canadians and Canadian Jewish Congress. Lebanese leaders, who head a group which is too small demographically to constitute a pressure group itself, would like to see the creation of a Canadian pan-Arab organization; Haitian leaders are doing likewise. Finally, as the last function of associations, leaders mention the various forms of solidarity created among immigrants by means of ethnic institutions. However, while these leaders believe that ethnic associations have an important social and political role, a number of them point to the risk of ghettoization and the necessity of increased involvement in society as a whole. On this point, there is a split among ethnic bureaucratic elites about solidarity among immigrant groups. Some leaders support multi-ethnic alliances and associations to defend the interests of immigrants and form a third pole between Québec Anglophones and Francophones. Others object to this idea and to the Québec government's policy of intercultural *rapprochement*.

Pursuing another line of research, Rublee and Shaw (1991) demonstrate how the degree of mutual aid within an immigrant group is one of the factors which affect the living conditions of group members and contribute to their social isolation. Rublee and Shaw demonstrate this phenomenon on the basis of interviews with female Latin American refugees settled in Nova Scotia. As impediments to broad social integration, the writers cite (as do numerous other researchers) weak knowledge of English, professional status and unemployment. However, they also point to the absence of assistance from ethnic institutions and the lack of involvement in leisure activities.

## III. STUDIES OF PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSALIST GROUPS

There are very few studies on patterns of immigrant involvement in associations, clubs or groups that include people of all ethnocultural origins. Moreover, some researchers question the notion that altruistic activities, such as volunteer work and mutual aid, are the only indicators and forms of social participation. We will take studies of sport as an example of this discussion.

### III.1. Leisure Associations: Vehicles of "Integration"?

Several writers have investigated whether involvement in voluntary associations increases contact between immigrants and natives. Boissevain (1971) concludes that participation in universalist athletic clubs serves to increase relations between people of different ethnocultural origins.

Contributors to the collection of essays edited by Harney (*Sports and Ethnicity*, 1985) outline the debate on the function of ethnic and universalist sporting associations. They describe the ethnic tensions created by the participation of immigrants and their descendants in local sporting activities, particularly between 1920-1940[41].

The question raised relates directly to the potential dual role of these associations as vehicles of mutual aid and social cohesion. The question is: do such associations serve to depoliticize young people by channelling their energies towards purely expressive ends or, on the contrary, do they foster forms of solidarity and social cohesion? Do ethnic or universal associations serve to socialize immigrants of various mother tongues and cultures to the urban culture of large Canadian metropolitan centres?

In one of the articles in this volume, Kidd attempts to demonstrate that involvement in sports cannot be interpreted simply as a quest for personal pleasure, but should be understood also as serving an instrumental and social purpose. Through its attendant symbols, sport renews the disunity or cohesion of a group or society. In addition, Kidd outlines how sport, introduced by British army officers, has become a Canadian practice. He believes that immigrants created sporting associations between 1900 and 1930 in response to their exclusion from "British" clubs. They were also motivated by a desire to make leisure activities accessible to the working classes, mostly immigrants of various origins. He describes in these terms the political motivations behind the creation of associations and the links between them and left-wing political organizations of the day.

Mott (1981) also addresses these questions on the basis of an historical study of the Canadianization of "Foreigners" through their growing involvement in national athletic activities and associations in Winnipeg between the late 19th century and 1914. He cites immigrants' acceptance of Anglo-Canadian cultural norms, such as the value attached to physical performance and to sport as a salutary activity.

### III.2. Ethnic Origin, Volunteer Work and Leisure Activities

There are no studies on immigrant participation in voluntary or leisure activities within organizations or in informal groups including people of all ethnocultural origins. Some studies touched on the subject between 1960 and 1970, but here the concept of ethnicity relates to linguistic practice, i.e., the use of English or French (Meisel and Lemieux, 1967; Marple, 1974; Kenyon, McPherson and Knoop, 1975; Boileau, 1976; Zeeb, 1978). Moreover, the little information available is very general. According to the findings of one of the first Canadian studies on the settlement of immigrants (Goldlust and Richmond, 1975), origin as an ethnocultural self-definition has no effect on involvement in organizations of whatever kind. This study did not distinguish between

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[41] For example, in 1933 scuffles broke out at a baseball game between residents of Jewish and British origin of the working class Toronto neighbourhood of Christie Pitts.

mutual aid and leisure associations and other types of organizations. However, a 1975 survey (Gruneau and Hollands, 1979) of leaders of Canadian sporting associations reveals that, since 1955, these leaders have essentially been drawn from the ranks of highly educated native English speakers from large urban centres. Redmond (1987) examines the ethnoculturally based hierarchy among athletes in Canada and elsewhere.

### III.3. Leisure Time

Some studies deal indirectly with the question of involvement in leisure activities by examining the use of leisure time. Ujimoto (1987) deals with the distribution of leisure time in elderly Chinese, Korean and Japanese immigrants. His study leads him to three conclusions. The shorter the time spent in Canada, the more likely activities are to centre on the family and circles of compatriots. Korean immigrants present one distinctive feature: they are involved in more leisure activities and volunteer work than are Chinese and Japanese immigrants, because of their religious affiliations. In all three groups, the proportion of individuals who do not participate in leisure activities outside the home is twice as high as the proportion of those who engage in no such activities within the family. These data, collected from a survey of 800 immigrants, illustrate the importance of examining patterns of daily life before describing any form of social participation.

More recently, Tirone and Shaw (1997) have discussed the role of cultural socialization in the perception and use of leisure time, based on interviews with Indian immigrant women. Like Ujimoto, Tirone and Shaw show the central role of family life in these women's lives and the slight importance they attach to personal leisure. These women have no desire for free time for themselves or for leisure outside the family sphere, and indeed view such activities in a negative light.

### III.4. The Role of Religion

There is a large number of Canadian studies of churches and religious institutions, but they do not use the ethnocultural variable to analyse the activities of members. We know that in the United States, religious conviction is the primary factor in participation in volunteer activities. One in two Americans spends two to three hours a week on such activities, mostly through religious institutions. Of course, we also know that the United States is the most religious of all Western countries. According to a 1995 Gallup poll, 61per cent of Americans are of the opinion that democracy cannot survive unless the majority of citizens believe in a God of some kind. Similarly, according to the Princeton Religion Research Center index (which measures eight indicators of religious practice and belief), in 1995, 42 per cent of Americans had attended a religious service during the week preceding the survey. The percentage was highest (70 per cent) among those with a college education or higher. These facts should prompt research on the relationship between types of religious practice and belief and volunteer work in Canada. A study of young immigrants (Helly, 1997) shows, on a small scale, that Adventist and evangelical churchgoers, particularly of Haitian origin, volunteer either in their religious institutions or in non-religious organizations, as

do Vietnamese immigrants who go to Buddhist pagodas. These institutions and organizations can be either ethnic or universalist, and may also serve as the site of leisure activities (choirs, music, dance).

## Conclusion

Volunteer work and leisure activities among immigrants as forms of social participation are a largely neglected field of research in Canada, especially over the last ten years. On the other hand, research on community-building, the social and political function of ethnic institutions, and their organization is highly developed. For one thing, researchers in the sociology of leisure have yet to take an interest in immigrant populations. In addition, there is little research on volunteer work in general in Canada.

It is true that public funding of many ethnic institutions over the last 20 years has transformed the role of these organizations and diminished their former role as instruments of mutual aid. This raises a question, admittedly a somewhat mechanical one: will immigrants, their descendants and people from immigrant backgrounds henceforth engage more extensively in volunteer activities in universalist organizations? Similarly, increased opportunities for individual leisure activities have transformed one of the roles of ethnic associations in the post-war period. We know, however, that the number of clubs and associations with this goal, such as religious groups and churches that are not part of the Catholic and Protestant hierarchies, has grown in Western countries. Does this phenomenon not affect minority ethnocultural groups?

Finally, there has been no theoretical consideration of the sociological function and meaning of social participation; meanwhile, the term "social integration" is bandied about incessantly in ethnic studies. The construction of indicators of social participation, as this seminar seeks to do, seems to demand a theoretical discussion of this type.

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## Workshop 3

## Participation in the Voluntary Sector

Moderator: Valerie Pruegger, City of Calgary

Summary: Elke Winter, Chaire en relations ethniques, Université de Montréal

### Comments directly related to Denise Helly's paper

There is plenty of research on ethnic organizations (their structures, political and social functions) and none on individuals of ethnic origin participating in non-ethnic groups (like sports clubs). We will probably see much more by examining why people of ethnic origin rarely participate in the global society and its organizations. We might see there are barriers in the host society towards immigrant participation; we could see racism, frustrations and the prevalence of non-recognition of immigrants.

Why do some people participate in voluntary work? Why don't others?
Do we *have* to participate? (Is it a "must"?)
Why should we participate?
What is the meaning of non-participation?
(Does non-participation in organizations necessarily signify non-participation in society?)

### Research gaps indicated in Denise's paper

We need more social indicators to define participation.
We need more research on leisure and recreational activities and organizations (sports clubs) and on volunteer work in general.
We need more research on religious organizations and on the role religion plays in social participation in the volunteer sector. (Different factors like culture, race, sex, income, time, and especially religion are very important.)

### Definition and methodology considerations

While discussing research on social participation we noticed two kinds of preoccupations:

1. What is to be analyzed when studying social participation (content-orientation)?
2. How to do research when studying social participation (methodology-orientation)?

**Definition of problems**

- How do we define *immigrants* (length of stay in Canada, cultural difference, race)?
- For how long is one considered still to be an immigrant? (Ethnic identity and immigrant status are two different things. Most people coming into Canada aspire to leave the immigrant status behind, but often they do not want to give up their specific "ethnic" culture and identity.)
- Ethnic identity might be a reaction to the politics of becoming a good Canadian.
- How do we define *participation* (level and type of activities)?
- We should not think of participation only in the dimension defined by the nation-state. It can be *supra*-national, depending on where your friends and relatives live.
- There has to be made a distinction between the sectors of "*communauté*" and "*communautaire*": When we talk of participation we have to make a distinction: do we talk of participation in the daily life environment (community) or do we talk of participation in the volunteer sector (where you accept certain mandates). There is a qualitative difference between the two kinds of participation.

  Community: *milieu* of daily life community, strong personal relationships.
  Volunteer sector: administration, power relations, formal and official structures.
- Social participation varies over time. It is different at various stages of life.
  What is the impact of family life trajectories on social participation?
  Should we study children's participation?
- We have to distinguish between the participation of leaders and the community at large: they often pursue different goals.
- What is the *voluntary sector* and who defines it?
- The voluntary sector has to be defined in a dynamic way. Its makeup and meaning change over time.

This sector includes more than social circles. It can embrace professional associations, political groups, sports clubs, etc.

**Methodological problems**

- Issues of research are framed by organizations and institutions according to a specific political context that is not necessarily shared by the minority groups.
- The majority group defines terms and research issues.
  Who is driving the research agenda?
  Who has the control and the knowledge to define the host society?
- How to find out the representativeness of ethno-cultural organizations?
- Who is the researcher? Does he/she participate in the community?

- How to measure social participation? (We should never put "Do you volunteer?" in a questionnaire because – even in our culture – the answer will be "no".)

**The impacts of socio-political groups and organizations on social participation**

There is a lack of research on socio-political service organizations in Canada and the impact they have on social cohesion.

A lot of socio-political activities are taking place that are not documented. There are 60 to 80 national ethnocultural organizations in Canada. They are represented by umbrella groups that are seen as non-political. They also see themselves as non-political, but do play a political role in Canadian ethnic politics.

Who are these groups and where are they located?
What do they do; what role do they play?
How do they perceive their own role?
What is their relationship with other ethnocultural groups in Canada?

There is a continuum between local, regional and national organizations. The articulation between these various levels of organization is not evident and has to be studied. Problem: How can we categorize the existing organizations? (They have to be categorized in order to find out what activities are going on the different levels.)

Given the importance of the impact of Metropolis on immigrants (and vice versa), the intermediation between organizations becomes very important:

Which organizations are involved in inter-community activities?
What is the scope of interaction with the members of the community?
Is there a great deal of collaboration with other organizations?

**Example:**

In Toronto, immigrants and refugees from Africa have at least 55 organizations representing them. These are local organizations with enormous variations. We need to know the boundaries of their activities to judge the role they (and their members) play in terms of social participation. We are still struggling with questions like:

What values and goals do they uphold?
Do they have a wider influence than the people they represent?

We need more research on community or municipal involvement in decision-making and local government. There are many activities at the municipal level that are influenced by the work of community groups or neighbourhood tables.

How do decision-making and participation work on these levels?

The power structure in society causes a situation whereby the voluntary sector can only pick up what is left. (Today, many traditional volunteer domains are "colonized"

by the state.) Thus the content of this sector is already defined. Accordingly, changes in the voluntary sector are often induced along structural lines.

Re-management of funding and financial cutbacks disrupt the status quo: the resulting compromises and changes in organizational involvement have more impact than the simple reduction in numbers of people and the degree to which they contribute or participate.

**Respecting the views of minority groups in research on social participation**

Research often neglects to take a closer look at immigrants' perceptions and definitions of social participation. We should take into consideration that the definition of participation is not neutral; rather, it is cultural. The ways to participate in a community differ from culture to culture. There is very little literature on the subjective view of minority groups. The point of departure for social research should be the subjective experience of the people being studied; much too often researchers work with the conceptual framework of the dominant group and impose their views and categories on the groups being analysed; they tell them who they are and what they must do. We should frame research differently and find more adequate models to allow ethnic groups to express themselves. This can be done by doing qualitative empirical research in collaboration with the minority groups (equal partnership between researchers and members of the group analysed: planning executives; evaluation of programs). We should keep in mind that research can inflict damage on the community. Working *with* a community is different than working *on* a community.

Whom do ethnocultural organizations really represent?
How do refugees and immigrants (as potential Canadian citizens) fulfill their own chances to participate?

**Participation, and according to whose agenda?**

There are three kinds of participation:

1. Participation in organizations.
   This is a kind of group-specific participation because the participants want to defend the interests of the community. These interests are not necessarily identical to their personal goals. (We have to differ between collective affiliations and individual goals.)
2. Participation in organizations of the larger society.
3. Participation in organizations that try to improve intercultural understanding and relationships.

**The importance of "race"**

Race is considered to be the most important factor hindering the integration of "visible" minorities. While foreign accents usually vanish during the second or third generation of settlement, different skin colour or physical characteristics will rest. They

have an influence on the sense of belonging and thus on participation. When people still ask you where you come from, it may seem as if they are telling you that you do not belong here. And if you feel you don't belong, you are less motivated to participate.

We should study the issue of "race" since visible minorities feel this is still the most important obstacle to equal membership and full socio-political participation. Shifting away from the term "race" and the use of the term "cultural diversity" is a policy/ideology imposed by the dominant group; they impose their perspective on the minority groups. Speaking of "cultural differences" and "diversity" instead of racial discrimination hides the underlying power relations.

**Suggestion: overcome the dichotomy of "us" and "them"**

Often a dichotomy between immigrants and "us" is made; the concept of "us" (host society) is *considered* to be homogeneous; this is in fact false. And neither are immigrants ("them") a homogeneous group. The notion of the host society has to be fully analysed. The point of departure should lie in the dichotomy of immigrants ("them" versus "us"), we have to start by first taking a closer look at "us".

Who is the host society and what is its ideology?
Who is already integrated? Why?
And who is still considered to belong to "them"? Why?

**Beyond "integration process" and "cultural community"**

When talking about immigrants or immigrant communities, there is often the allusion to integration, culture shock, suffering, leaving behind, etc. Participation programs are designed to help immigrants to cope with that. Some immigrants refuse to take part in this kind of "psycho-social" activity offered to them they by the host society. (Often the only alternative seems to be social representation, i.e., defending the rights of an ethnic minority group.) Yet these activities geared towards immigrants do not provide a chance for meaningful civic participation. A third alternative has to be invented, one that entails social participation on an equal basis with the host society.

**The "culture"/ethnicity of the host society**

We keep forgetting that the host society is not "neutral"; rather, it is influenced by culture and is in fact the biggest "cultural community":

- The separation between work and leisure is something very North American (culturally induced).
- Volunteering is not a social tradition in many cultures and may indeed seem to be "unnatural" to many ethnic groups. Ethnic groups often have other ways to "volunteer" that are different from ours. We do not seem to have the instruments/methodology to study their ways to participate... or maybe we just call it differently.

- Social participation in different groups may be perceived and defined in different ways.

  What does social participation mean to the various immigrant groups?
- Minority groups might participate in a way that is meaningful to them. This kind of participation might not be recognized as such by the host society.
- We need research on the ways in which ethnic groups would like to volunteer and to participate in the host society (if they are allowed to).

**Symbolic recognition and full participation in the host society**

Symbolic recognition is an important factor to be studied. Social participation means more than being on a list of participants; it deals with real and symbolic inclusion and access to the historical memory of the host society. We live in a society where the exercise of equal rights is not a serious problem any more. Research should therefore concentrate on immigrants' different identities and how they are recognized symbolically in society.

Are immigrants invited to share the collective memory of the majority group or are there boundaries set up by the majority to prevent full integration and participation?

Who defines him or herself as being an immigrant? Who is defined as such by others? How do immigrants try to integrate and how are they invited to do so? What are the obstacles to participation and integration?

**Example:**

An interesting example (especially in Québec) lies in the relationship between language abilities and the feeling of belonging. When immigrants speak French at school, it does not mean they share the historical memory of Québec. When young people speak French, are they Québécois in terms of identity and historical memory? And if not, why is that so? Do they reject participation in the host society or are there boundaries (like racism) that make them feel alien? We need more empirical (qualitative) research into the various ways racism takes hold and how it excludes people from full participation in society. While analyzing this, we must distinguish between primary and systematic (or bureaucratic) racism.

How does racism work in Canadian society? Does the dominant group construct barriers to immigrant participation? What kind of barriers are built up by the dominant group towards the participation of immigrants? (We should analyze official discourses, stereotypes, education, etc.)

How is inequality/ difference constructed and legitimized?

There is a big difference between joining an ethnic organization because you think you get something back and participation in an activity controlled by the host society. Since the host society perceives you to be simply a member of an ethnic group, its members might eventually prevent you from participating in their organizations. Or they may defend opinions that do not correspond to yours (since members of a minority group often have other interests than the majority group). People generally want full

participation; if they feel they cannot integrate on equal terms, they would rather not participate at all. We therefore have to study the subjective experience of the individual. (It can also happen that you feel still marginalized even when every body else considers that you are participating.)

There are different levels of participation related to the question of belonging. We need better measures to de-code these levels. Research should clarify what kind of participation is most needed to create social cohesion in the society at large.

There are activities in which people participate by giving money, and there are others where people give time and energy. There is a huge variation in how to become involved.

*When* do they participate and in *which* way? What is the underlying motivation for social participation in the volunteer sector? What makes people refrain from participating?

## List of Participants

| | | |
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| 53. | Susan Scott | (Canadian Heritage) |
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| 55. | Daiva Stasiulis | (Carleton University) |
| 56. | Christine Straehle | (Germany) |
| 57. | Lois Sweet | (Journalist) |
| 58. | Caroline Tessier | (Université de Montréal) |
| 59. | Michèle Vatz-Laaroussi | (Sherbrooke University) |
| 60. | Timothy Welsh | (Immigrant Services Society of B.C.) |
| 61. | Marvin Wideen | (SFU) |
| 62. | Ricardo Zuniga | (Université de Montréal) |